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Life-Work of Sri Aurobindo

Prof. JYOTISH CH. GHOSE

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SRI AUROBINDO

Prof. JYOTISH CHANDRA GHOSE

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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

This book was composed by the author on the 55th birthday of Sri Aurobindo and first published from the Atmasakti Library, at 15, College Square in 1929. The manuscript copy was smuggled out of prison in instalments when the author was incarcerated inside the jail under Regulation III of 1818. It contained many printing mistakes as it was hurriedly printed and published by the revolutionery friends outside. So it requires re-printing without substantial change in the subject matter of the book.

Though much water has flown since that day and Sri Aurobindo had passed through many higher planes during the intervening period and also there are many worthy persons to expound his ideals and achievements in a better way, still the author thinks that present India is passing through the same phase of confusion and chaos as it was when Sri Aurobindo came to Bengal. Therefore this book with its political outlook, ideal and

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tactics still finds place for those who really feel seriously for the service to Mother India with the same determination and self-surrendering principle for the cause both politically and socially as taught by Sri Aurobindo.

The author having had the fortune of passing the time with Sri Aurobindo during the revolutionery phases of his life, has the advantage of placing the relevant facts before the admirers and followers of the greatest sage of the present century.

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DEDICATED

TO

THE DIVINE MASTER.

Who is seated in the hearts of all living creatures and is the Motor-power directing the Cosmic Movements and Who is manifested in creation as 'Truth', 'Bliss', 'Light', 'Power', 'Mastery', 'Beauty' and 'Love' unfolded by his wayward and disobedient

CHILD.

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INTRODUCTION.

I am impelled to celebrate the fifty-fifth birth-day of Sri Aurobindo by writing a few words on his life-work and his philosophy and incidentally to notice something about his synthetic *Sadhana* of life. It is not generally customary to say anything about a personality during his life-time but there are certain special circumstances with regard to this case which make it only fitting and proper that man should study the successive stages in the evolution of this unique personality and learn to profit by his experiences in the various planes which he has traversed in a single life-time. When a personality retires for *Yoga*, his career automatically comes to an end and his life-work becomes a public property. He may or may not come back after his *sadhana* is complete that would not make any difference ; for, even if he comes back he would essentially be a different man from what he was formerly ; at best, he was then working under the direction and inspiration of his Divine Teacher,

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without his nature being completely transformed though ear-marked by God for the fulfilment of certain great ends but not as yet a Divine Man himself, enveloped in an aura of Divine radiance, throwing sparks of light and energy wherever he goes and helping the luminous transformation of the world steeped in darkness and ignorance. The man that will come out of his seclusion someday will not be our man in the narrow sense of the term, devoting his life to the fulfilment of our immediate needs of life, the petty gains of a circumscribed outlook, but a man whose only claim to life would be the fulfilment of his God-ordained mission on Earth—to bring down a pure atmosphere of Truth on Earth from which all irrespective of caste, colour and creed who may be spiritually fit to receive the new light will derive the supreme benefit.

The old Aurobindo in the new name-sake of him is dead and to-day we sing not a song of brotherly congratulations simply because he has been permitted to add another year of success and failures to his pile of years but an epiphany glorifying the life-passage of the

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Divine *Purusha* in his body, whom we see passing through a new cycle of existence to fulfil his Divine *Lila* on Earth.

In writing this estimate about his life-work, I do not associate myself with any school of thought that may be working in his name, nor any sort of propaganda, public or private, which may be carried on in his name, which is mostly done for the fulfilment of particular ends ; nor do I join hands with those who celebrate the birthday anniversary of the Great Soul with mirth and festivities, although I recognise that they have their place in a world so full of complexities ; but I do so because today I feel the inner necessity of establishing a spiritual communion with the Great personality as an offering of surrender in the great divine *yajna* (cosmic sacrifice) in which he is engaged, and shall consider myself thankful if it serves that purpose even by a little, and may I have the courage to say that I want no human boon in return for the humble offering.

So help me God !

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LIFE-WORK OF

SRI AUROBINDO

CHAPTER I.

BIRTH—PARENTAGE—EDUCATION.

It has never been possible for me to take an active part in the political movement of the country, being by nature ill-fitted to keep myself always in the white-heat of enthusiasm and excitement and the tip-toe of suspense and expectation, which are, as it were, the salt of political life ; but, in spite of my passivity of temperament, I claim to have always been actuated by a feeling of deep sympathy with the national political revival of the country and as such, being deeply interested in the movement, it has been possible for me to appreciate

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and understand, even though as passive onlooker for the greater part of my life, the inner psychology of the great national revival. And therefore I naturally feel that although I do not know much of Sri Aurobindo's life in its detail still I have a right to speak about him, as I could, in my own way, see through his soul, when he was the great outstanding personality in the great National Movement in Bengal.

The little incidents of his private and public life are better known to others than myself and therefore, I shall detail and restrict myself to a study of the general psychological lines which stood out prominently in the development of the inner man in Sri Aurobindo.

He was born on the 15th of August, 1872, the year synchronously coinciding with the passing away of Joseph Mazzini, the Great Prophet and seer of Italian Nationalism and if we hazard a bit of philosophical sentimentalism, we may be permitted to say that the great Divine world which worked with Mazzini as its medium and spokesman to show the new light to Europe, came back to Asia to lift her up to corresponding spiritual level for which she had

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qualified herself, after the first instalment of spiritual light had been bestowed on Europe and created its own spokesman in the person of Sri Aurobindo, whose life-history has to be studied in direct relation to the movement for the Great Spiritual revival of Humanity. If we trace the psychological evolution of Sri Aurobindo's Life, we shall find that what Mazzini is to the evolution of New Thought-culture in Europe, Sri Aurobindo is exactly that in the spiritual awakening and rejuvination of Asia. He has never been exactly a reproduction or imitation of any personality however great and noble but he is eminently fitted to do that great work for Asia, suited to her special spiritual temperament, and the special internal conditions and the impact of world-forces in the midst of which she has been placed, which Mazzini did for Europe and as such the two outstanding personalities may stand a comparison without any disadvantage to our worthy countryman or any stamp of inferiority on the great Italian visionary, the regenerator and creator of modern Europe.

He was the son of an I.M.S. Officer, the Late Mr. K. D. Ghose, who loved the English ways of

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living and though possessing a heart full of magnanimity can not be called a lover of Indian culture. He sent his wife to England with his childern to give them the western system of Education and train them in European system of living and we all know that Sj. Barindra Kumar Ghose of revolutionary fame, the pioneer of the revolutionary movement of Bengal the younger brother of Sri Aurobindo was born in England. Sri Aurobindo went to England when he was only nine years of age, and stayed there for fourteen years to complete his education. Fortunately for us he had developed a strong national inspiration too early in life, as he himself tells us at the age of fourteen, and he brooded too long and too well on the degradation, disgrace, humiliation and shame of slavery to which his nation was subjected, to help him to gauge the utmost depth and far-sighted vision to see and understand the inner secret of the "Sirens' charm" that was eating into the vitals of the nation's manhood in subjection, and he earnestly set about to discover the *Sadhana* that would free the nation from its coils. He has himself said that he did not come

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back as a hater of Englishman but he claimed to have studied the psychology of the people, which had made them develop immense power enabling them to rule over the Empire which they had acquired for themselves and he, for one, was anxious to stake his all to rediscover the eminent fountain of strength of his nation by diving deep into the inner life and find out ways and means to cope successfully with the onslaught of the western civilisation. Therefore from the very beginning of his political career we noticed that he had absolutely no faith in the saving power of British statesmanship and he wanted the nation to stand on its own legs, to develop the inner qualities of *tapasya* which was India's speciality but which they lacked in any supreme degree at that moment, as an effective set-off against the insidious encroachments of British statesmanship. In his opinion, it was absolutely necessary to turn the Britisher inside out, to make a close study of his psychological temperament and to understand clearly the secret of the power that he was wielding as a race in order that we might cope successfully against it ; for true power lay in a full knowledge of our

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opponent's tactics. But the secret of success lay not in base imitation of western culture, tactics and methods but in finding out the inner source of strength in the nation, to develop and organise its resources into a mighty power and put it up against the power of the West.

Although he did not inherit anything from his father's line from a national point of view, his inheritance from mother's side was singularly rich in nationalism as she was the daughter of the grandfather of nationalism in Bengal, the late Rajnarayan Bose of blessed memory. We do not know what Sri Aurobindo learnt, while he was lisping and prattling as a child, from his illustrious maternal grandfather, what potent seed of nationalism he had silently infused into him through the kisses and caresses with which he had indulged the child, but there is no denying the fact that the silent influence of the grand old man on the life of Sri Aurobindo was not inconsiderable. We know some thing of the life-story of late Rajnarayan, the maker of modern Bengal, how he had worked for physical, intellectual and moral uplift of the youths of

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Bengal from a nationlistic point of view and had silently created the nucleus, round which the great nationalist revival in Bengal of the anti-partition days developed and came to a head. Thus we may be permitted to hold that in his descent, Sri Aurobindo was the product of a synthesis between Indian and Western cultures, the former predominating from the very beginning and assimilating the latter very early in the progress of evolution with a strong bias for spiritu-psychic Bengal Nationalism intertwined with all that is noble and great in the Marhatta temperament. He was highly successful in his educational career in England, equally loved by his professors and class-fellows, securing first-class marks in classics in the Tripos Examination and standing fourth in order of merit in the I. C. S. Examination for which he competed in the same year, we are told, with Mr. Beachcroft who was destined to sit as Judge over him in the great sensational state-trial at Alipore in 1908-1909 in which he was the chief accused and alleged brain and ringleader of the conspiracy. It is highly creditable to Sri Aurobindo that he was declared

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innocent of any illegal conspiracy by one who had known him very intimately in life, was thoroughly acquainted with his personal views —public and private—had known him for years to have formed a dispassionate opinion about him, who had placed before him a hopeless jumble of evidence and exhibits, so that nothing possible under the sun was kept away from him to help him to form an adverse judgment about Sri Aurobindo's honesty of purpose. Mr. Beachcroft gave as his judicial finding that it was not illegal in the British Jurisprudence to preach the ideal of freedom which was Aurobindo's life-mission, and he was satisfied that Sri Aurobindo had not overstepped the limits afforded by the law in all he had done in his public and private life, which lay exhaustively revealed in the mass of evidence placed before the court.

Nothing is known at present about his fourteen years' life spent in Great Britain excepting one little incident which does not matter much at present: it was with regard to his failure to pass the riding-test for the I. C. S. Examination. It is said that he appeared and

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failed to pass the test, but as a matter of fact we are told, the intervention of a supernatural power intervened at the last moment and almost physically restrained him from walking out of his room. Those who have any experience of this supernatural intervention in their personal life will corroborate every word of the statement but even those who do not, will readily agree with us that it was a singular piece of good fortune which prevented Sri Aurobindo from qualifying himself for the riding-test, as in that case India would have been, for all practical purposes, deprived of the eminent services which he rendered to the cause of her struggle for freedom. It is also a truism to say that but for the initiative that he took much of what has been done to-day and what is on the way of being done to-morrow could never have stood any chance of being fructified.

In any case, his life in Great Britain, it may be surmised, was profitably spent in self-preparation for his great destiny. His vast scholarship in the classical literature of Europe helped him to foster that mystical temperament and deep regard for symbolism which stood him

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in good stead when he wanted to traverse the path of the Indian system of *Yoga* to explore its possibilities for the reconstruction of the world-society and to steep himself thoroughly in the truths preached in the mystical philosophy of the East. Besides, during his study in the West he greatly developed what is absolutely necessary in all serious work of an enduring kind—a well balanced, rational mind, able to discriminate between the truth and dissembling appearances of falsehood, which come in the guise of truth and too often create havoc in the ranks of the average run of truth-seekers, who are always neither very earnest about their business nor possessed of a sound discriminating Judgment. Moreover he had studied thoroughly the inner working of the western civilisation as an element of self-preparation—its driving-force and its future possibilities, its failures and its drawbacks,—which very few, if any, have done either before or after him. Generally men go to Europe and come back with certain historical and social traditions of the English people and have neither the capacity nor the inclination to study the psychology of the ruling race. This

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is why we are not getting the true type of man to lead the national movement in India, for we have almost forgotten that a thorough study of the methods and temperament of our opponent is necessary before we can successfully cope with them in any great encounter.

A word has now to be said as to how he came back to India. It so happened that at that time his highness the Gaekwar of Baroda was in England and he was in need of a Private Secretary and when Sri Aurobindo applied for that post, he was asked to an interview and was forthwith appointed to that post. He came back to India sometime in 1895, well equipped for the movement to do the work in his own way for the mighty fulfilment of the national destiny for which he had been chosen the worthy instrument of the Divine Mother.

It is not known why Sri Aurobindo chose to accept that post to which he had been called. Perhaps he felt that living in close touch with a first class feudatory chief he would be able to get an intimate knowledge of the practical working of the Government-machinery.

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But on coming back to India, he preferred being placed in charge of the Gaekwar's College at Baroda on a salary of Rs. 700/- per month as Vice-Principal of the College, as he intended to train up young pupils who might help him in his work when the time came for it and above all, to live in an atmosphere of pure literary activity, when he could pursue his research-work in the field of Indian culture and *Yoga* unimpeded by any other collateral considerations, as he felt that in order to do that work for which he was destined, it was absolutely necessary that with the help of the critical discerning judgment which he had acquired during his stay in the West he should go over the whole field of Indian culture and *Yoga* and assimilate all that he found suitable to modern conditions and fitted for his own *sadhana*. In this spirit, he settled down at Baroda, as one who knew that his time was coming and who silently set about to prepare himself to obey that great Divine call.

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CHAPTER II.

LIFE IN BOMBAY PRESIDENCY

Not much is known about his life at Baroda—the silent method of preparation and self-culture of the man who was destined to create a revolution in the thought-currents of the educated middle-class Indians, constituting the cream of Indian society, who found themselves more or less dominated by the culture of the West, resulting in a slavish dependence on their rulers and a glittering materialistic outlook on life. He did not try to express himself so much to others as he kept himself busy in testing, sifting and assimilating the truths which he found in the Vedas, the Upanishads, the six systems of Hindoo philosophy, the Gita, the Puranas, the system of Hindoo social reconstruction, Indian system of *Yoga*, or system of practical self-discipline and psychology, the conception and working of the Indian state, and what not,—in fact, everything extant about Indians and India which could be worth knowing, understanding, and assimilating

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for the great Divine purpose for which he was being trained. As is well known, he did not know Bengali, his mother tongue, which he learnt by engaging a Bengali private tutor during his residence in Baroda. With regard to practical work only this much can be surmised that he was giving a sort of training in political philosophy suited to Indian conditions to the pupils of his college, so that we shall not be surprised to find the Marhatta Society of to-day deeply imbued with his philosophy and outlook on life in its practical aspect. As a matter of fact the work of Lokmanya Tilak and Sri Aurobindo in Maharastra cannot be separated, the two having worked conjointly for the creation of a healthy, self-reliant, public political life in the Province, with this difference that while Lokmanya Tilak in his own Province was busy to organise the public life in the country, Sri Aurobindo in the midst of his other and more important pursuits mainly devoted to self preparation for his future works, could only contribute substantially by influencing the thought current of the young workers silently, who were mostly his pupils

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and who happened to stand under the banner of Lokmanya Tilak in the public field. The great Lokmanya knew this himself and he had a high regard for Sri Aurobindo and even when Aurobindo had retired into private life Lok. Tilak would often try to induce him to come back to public life, as he felt that if there was anybody who could do something substantial under the present conditions, it was Sri Aurobindo. This explains why even now Maharastra has twice taken the initiative to start a movement for electing Sri Aurobindo as President of the Indian National Congress and there is every possibility that he would have been finally elected if he had not written to signify his unwillingness to accept the offer, if made. It can be said without fear of contradiction that not very many of the political leaders have done such useful silent work for another province as Sri Aurobindo did for Maharastra and young Maharastra of to-day does testify to this fact without reservation.

It is matter for just pride for Bengal that she can claim that one of her worthiest chosen sons worked to build up the national life in another

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sister-province for ten long years by which he was able to create a fair name for Bengal in Maharastra. These examples are very rare in the field of Indian politics, but we know of another brother of Maharastra, who came to live in our midst and worked whole-heartedly for the regeneration of Bengalee youths, standing shoulder to shoulder and sharing all the onerous responsibilities with those, who were entrusted with the task of nation-building in Bengal—I refer, of course, to the late Shakharam Ganesh Dewsker, who made it his life-mission to explain the Maharatta culture to the Bengalee youths through his invaluable writings. He will always be remembered for his "Baji Rao" and "Desher-Katha" the latter an adaptation almost approaching a liberal translation of Mr. Digby's "Prosperous British India," which authorities of the then-existing regime thought to proscribe and confiscate. However, all this is by the way.

But Sri Aurobindo knew that the great field of his activity would be Bengal and even in distant Baroda he was counting, in breathless suspense, the hours and moments waiting for

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the psychological time when Bengal will understand his life-mission and rush head-long into the thick of the fight for National Liberty ready, without grudging to pay the price for freedom which would be demanded of her. That time was not long in coming, it came in ten years, the comparatively small period when judged by the infinite potentialities of the movement that was launched into being, and Aurobindo was not found wanting when the Divine Call came for him and he resigned his post in a moment and left for Bengal to put in his God-ordained quota in the great fight in which Bengal found herself engaged.

Before we close this chapter, a word has to be said about his practice of yoga during his stay in Baroda. I have heard that he met a great yogee from Maharastra,—Bhaskarswami Lele, a Maharatta Brahmin, who initiated him into the mysteries of a particular system of Indian yoga which he followed up by his persistent devotion to its natural consummation and fulfilment. There is no denying the fact.

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CHAPTER III.

LIFE IN BENGAL.

The coming of Sri Aurobindo to Bengal marks an epoch-making period in the annals of the country. Never before in the history of the political evolution of the country had there been such a precious acquisition in the cause of the country's fight for freedom, not merely by virtue of his education, genius or talents, not even by virtue of his supreme sacrifice in the interest of the country but because there was no equal for him in the supreme self-consciousness he possessed of his God-ordained mission of which he was to be the chosen instrument some day to work out this Divine will, and in the silent, willing and steady preparation in the great Smithy of the Divine Workshop, where he was to be beaten into shape by the Divine Builder of Immortality to be thrown out as His chosen instrument in the field of work as a spark of fire to burn up all that was base and false in the national life of the country and turn it into true gold. He had silently gathered

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spiritual strength by an ardent disciplined course of Sadhana never to be led astray by passing exigencies of the hour, never yielding to any makeshift arrangements, however captivating to the imagination or suited to the temporary needs of the moment. This was the man whom everybody as we saw was convinced that the stamp of the Divine Seal had been fiixed on his word and everybody felt in his inmost heart of hearts that the man for Bengal, who had been long over-due according to their narrow short-sighted calculation, had at last come and there was no denying him anything and the honour of Bengal and her interest, and, for the matter of that, of all India would be safe in his keeping.

This 'fire-spark' as we know him was a man of medium height and could be called short of stature and of average weight, looking almost like a child. He was amiable in disposition and was mild gentle in his manners, when he would speak, he would do so in soft musical accents and his words in a private conversation had the effect of soothing the troubled nerves of the hearer, not by virtue of its intellectual impressiveness but by a sort of ethereal

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transmission of a psychic, spiritual fluid, so to say. In speaking Bengali he would sometimes stammer, not having mastered the speaking dialect thoroughly and when the mental equipoise would get perturbed, due to the ill-mastered language failing to express his thoughts in a forceful, potent way, he would suddenly break in with English in the midst of a conversation in Bengali and generally his conversation would be inter-spersed with English words. When he spoke in public, he would resign himself to a higher Power and not even think what he was going to say and would stand fixed like a statue, his nerves vibrating in response to a divine rhythm and we felt as we heard him that he had simply kept his psychic senses open and was just repeating automatically what he heard uttered by some invisible Power at his ears. This is the secret of the power and the force with which his words, written or spoken, have led on the readers or hearers. Meek as a lamb in the ordinary pursuits of life, he roared as a lion, a man Divinely inspired, when he had to work as a public man. This even balance between the two extremes

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was the great secret of his popularity and his power over the politically-minded, middle-class intelligentsia and specially over the patriotic youths of the country. Here we want to impress it clearly on all that it was not the mere externals of his life that charmed and captivated the imagination of the people but it was the inner light and the spiritual power which he had acquired by his long and arduous pursuit of yoga, which had created that sweet balance in him, which produced the divine rhythms in all his movements—his speech, his writings, his opinions, his forceful and persuasive eloquence of measured words in the councils of deliberation. This was the man of the hour who had come to take his rightful place in the God-ordained movement for the self-fulfilment of the Indian people.

The psychological situation had already been created in Bengal by the Invisible Power working from behind the scenes, which would be able to utilise the divine potential energy generated in Sri Aurobindo and when the two came in contact, the Person and the Field, the one fulfilled the other. We must remember

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that it is most intrinsically true that a personality can create his own field whenever he likes and fulfil his God-ordained destiny; what is true is that when a man has surrendered himself to the Divine Power within, that Divine Power reserves him for the great end which He has in view, giving him the necessary training and perparation which he assimilates, while He is engaged in preparing the field for him in His own way and when the time comes, He sends him out, equipping him with all the weapons of the battle, to fight and conquer, seeking the fulfilment of the Divine destiny in him and the people the humanity and the movement, in that particular phase of evolution in which he has been called upon to work.

The ill-advised but extremely fortunate crisis had come to pass—the sentiment of the Bengalee race, supremely susceptible to the healthy sentimentalism of the finest type, had been outraged and against the united voice of the people, Bengal had been partitioned for the sake of administrative efficiency from the standpoint of the bureaucracy but every one in Bengal felt that their Mother (we call and feel

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the native land to be our Mother and we say, 'Mother and the native land are superior to heaven') had been dismembered and they rose in open rebellion (without arms) against the high-handed-ness of the bureaucracy. Not all could understand the violation of the rights of the people, the people not being then so politically conscious, but every one without exception, the educated and the uneducated alike, felt and realised that poor Mother Bengal (all the more dear and sacred for her misery and poverty) had been really dismembered and the whole nation went into mourning as a sort of penance for this unfeeling act on the part of the 'infidel' bureaucracy (we are quoting the word actually in use). After these expiatory rites had been performed, the citizens of the two partitioned provinces tied the sacred ('Rakhi') thread mutually round their wrists as a token of deep love and brotherhood uttering the sacred formula—'we are one and united and none can separate us'. Then they protested emphatically against the high-handed-ness of the bureaucracy in no unmistakable terms and declared an all-round boycott of British

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goods to produce a telling impression on the British public. There were mammoth meetings all over the country even in its remotest corner and a huge mass of nascent sentimental enthusiasm had been liberated, which, in order to be effectively utilised, required the guidance of a man who had the vision of the seer and the practical instinct of the man of action. As we have noticed, this man was found in Sri Aurobindo.

The youths of the country had already suffered the brunt of the official repression most of all, because of their highly romantic nature and many had been rusticated for taking an active part in the political movement, others had been fined and some had left schools and colleges as a protest against the high-handed-ness of the then ruling bureaucracy and even the moral effect created was so great that the moderate leaders who had no far-sighted-ness about the future, had decided that something should be done for the education of the youths of the country on a national basis and they started a National Council of Education, with two colleges, one in Calcutta and another

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at Rangpur. Sri Aurobindo was appointed as the Principal of the Calcutta College and he formally took over charge, on his coming to Calcutta, sometime in 1906. But it was not long before there was a difference in principle as to the working of the college between Sri Aurobindo and the old members of the Executive Committee of the National Council, with the result that Sri Aurobindo cut off his connection with the Council. So far as we know, the chief point of difference was with regard to the admission of boys who had been rusticated from Government institutions on political grounds, Sri Aurobindo insisting on taking them in on the ground that they were just the sort of stuff that he wanted for his institution, which was mainly to be a training-ground for political workers, which consisted in imparting a sound education infusing the spirit of ardent nationalism, while the older leaders urged that only the educational system should be perfected, the deficiencies of the system of instruction in official institutions should be removed and in the National College, a thoroughly non-political educational atmosphere

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should prevail, thus setting up an educational ideal before the country by way of supplementing the Government institutions. This was in direct opposition to the work which Sri Aurobindo was called upon to do and he had no other alternative than to retire. He had ample and free scope for organising a model College on up-to-date lines at Baroda and he felt that the divine intention in the movement would miscarry if he were to accept a poor substitute for what he had left and restrict his energies to establishing a model College in Calcutta.

He accordingly thought of appealing to the wider public in the country in the name of Indian Nationalism and started a Nationalist Daily, 'the Bande Mataram', through the collaboration of certain prominent nationalist workers of the day, among whom were Sjs. Shyamsundar Chakravarty, Bipinchandra Paul, the late Raja Subodh Chandra Mullick, through whose princely munificence they could purchase a press of their own and last, but not the least, Sj. Upendranath Banerjee, one of the leading pioneers of the Revolutionary movement in Bengal. And we all know how in its columns,

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day after day, inspired articles were published explaining the high philosophy of Nationalism, the methods and straight-forward tactics of nationalist politics, the new cult of self-reliance, self-sacrifice and absolute devotion to the cause to the supersession of the effete, slavish and dependent moderatism of the day. The paper was also full of thoughtful articles on Indian culture and its highly spiritual tone was in direct opposition to the rank materialistic outlook on life preached and advocated by the West. Its high catholicity of views in matters national helped to bring about a healthy and lasting co-ordination among the nationalists of various provinces and established a permanent footing to serve as a common platform for all. There can be no denying the fact that through its preaching, a healthy national life was evolved in the land, highly organised, supremely conscious of its mission and its immediate goal, sure of its ways and means, and highly tenacious of its rights. It was not an organisation on party-labels, a system which is much in vogue as an absolutely necessary phase in the present stages of the movenent, but an organisation

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based on a spiritual unity of ideas, with this nationalist daily as its mouthpiece. Whoever read this newspaper—and it had an extensive sale all over India—and assimilated its views became, in the idea, automatically a member of the party and as there was no serious restriction in those days for the election of delegates to the Indian National Congress, the Nationalist party, for such it was called, was returned in large numbers, to form an overwhelming majority in its deliberations. Therefore, we find that the Congress was quickly becoming purified, knit together by a common unity of nationalist ideas based on self-help and self-reliance. The Congress of those days thus became more representative in the domain of the idea of the will and the views of a *free* people than the Congress of the present day, which has a tendency to represent the people *en masse* on a democratic basis, sharing its defects and weaknesses thereby losing much of its force of will, which is absolutely necessary in a life-and-death struggle with a government so highly organised, so powerful and so rich in its resources.*

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And the soul behind this new creation, the central figure of this new movement was Sri Aurobindo, as it was his ideas which had unified the people, had produced a common platform, had started a new organisation without association, based on a unity of ideas, which had in itself the potentiality of becoming more permanent and far-reaching in its effects than the present-day makeshift arrangements in the nature of a party-organisation. The two successive sessions of the Congress in 1906 and 1907 proved what useful work had been done in the country through the preaching of the 'Bande Mataram' and if the work of nation-building had been continued by the future leaders of the country on the solid bedrock of stubborn nationalism so firmly laid in those days and if the nation had not chosen to fly in the air,

* We must not be understood to decry the valuable work done by the Congress of the present-day as a highly useful experiment in the path of evolving a democratic machinery in the midst of almost insuperable difficulties. What we want to point out is that the conditions not being matured, it is very likely to fail by being an imperfect imitation of western institutions, with no chance of reproducing in the natural course of evolution the genius of the race.

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leaving the foundation uncared-for and in a dilapidated condition, much of the disappointment of present-day politics would have been spared.

Through the columns of the 'Bande Mataram' Sri Aurobindo exposed the hollow and suicidal tactics of the loyalist moderate party, expounded the cult of nationalism as a living faith, and thoroughly spiritualised the movement by enunciating that faith in terms of realised spirituality expressed in a rich mystic symbolism suited to the genius and special aptitude of the race. He also led back the nation from the delusion and *mirage* of Western materialistic civilisation and culture to the self-fulfilling spiritual culture of Asia. It was mainly through his exertions that moderatism became a dead cult in Bengal.

As every one knows, his was no smooth sailing in the field of politics, for, under the conditions prevailing in India at the present time, there is no room for armchair politicians and a sincere and earnest worker that he was, it is but natural that the bureaucracy should try to smother him and he was arrested on a charge of sedition as the alleged Editor of the

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nationalist daily, the 'Bande Mataram'. The charge was a technical one, namely, the publication of the translation of an offending article, the subject-matter of a charge of sedition brought against a vernacular weekly, the exponent of Bengal Revolutionary thought, the 'Yugantar'. The article was named 'Kabli Dawai' or 'the Kabuli prescription of a remedy' in which the writer advocated the use of physical force in self-defence as a remedy against assault, insult, and abuse to which the people were subjected at the time in the hands of foreigners. The publication of that article in translation proves with what active sympathy the nationalist leaders of those days looked on the revival movement among the youths of the country. They knew that the youths constituted the backbone of the revival movement all over the world owing to their highly romantic impulse, sincere devotion and earnest selflessness and if any widespread national movement was at all to be actualised, it must be with the help of these stalwarts. Thus it was that the nationalist leaders of those days walked hand-in-hand, in equal comradeship, sharing in the spirit, the

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joys and sorrows with the youths of the land. It was this intimate spiritual fellowship with his soldiers based on an inner *tapasya* which made Sri Aurobindo universally popular with the young generation of his day.

He was hauled up in court on a charge of sedition and everyone knows how the case failed equally on a technical question, as it had been launched on a technical issue, in as much as he could not be proved to have been the editor of the 'Bande Mataram'; the only person who could have cleared the point, according to prosecution, being Sj. Bipin Chandra Pal, who refused to give evidence on the ground that it was immoral to give evidence in a case in which coercion of public interest and *not* its safeguarding was the chief objective of the bureaucracy. As a result of this upsetting of bureaucratic plans Sri Aurobindo was acquitted and Sj. Bipin Chandra Pal was given six months' simple imprisonment and was sent to a jail at Buxar, outside the Province.

It may not be out of place here to say a word or two about this prosecution. There are reasons to suspect that the Executive wanted to

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cripple the Nationalist organisation so that it might not be able to work for the regeneration of the country along the lines of self-help and self-reliance and therefore they arrested the central figure in the group, knowing perfectly well that Sri Aurobindo was a very dangerous man from their point of view in consideration of his devotion and earnestness, his sterling sacrifice, his popularity and his supreme spirituality. They, however, were a bit too hasty in arresting him as there was nothing on record to show that he was the editor of the journal and the charge being technical, the printer alone was the fit person to have been arrested. Then they thought of jeopardising the honour of Sj. Bipin Chandra Pal by summoning him to give evidence in court against a brother-worker, knowing perfectly well that by this double move they would at least be able to capture one. They succeeded in their conspiracy, but the central figure of the game had to be discharged. There were less important persons in the staff of the paper who could have been brought in as witnesses to prove the case and the very fact that none was called except Sj. Bipinchandra

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proves conclusively the sinister intentions of the then ruling bureaucracy in launching the prosecution.

It is to be noticed in this connection that Sri Aurobindo during the whole course of the executive proceedings maintained his characteristic silence, thus justifying his name of 'the silent man', not choosing to answer any questions put to him, reserving his statement up till the last, which is allowed by the law of the land. With regard to the much-discussed question of the feasibility of entering a defence in court during the course of a trial, he was always of opinion that a nationalist was quite competent to claim the protection offered by the law inasmuch as he knew that the executive was seeking to smother him in defiance of the law and as it is not obligatory in law to make a statement in the initial stage of the proceedings, his advice to all nationalists was to reserve statement even when attempts would be made by sinister conversational tactics to wheedle something out of them.

There is an impression amongst our countrymen that the man who suffers by going

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to jail, being convicted on a political offence, is the only fit person to lead a political movement and to satisfy this popular feeling, the leaders of the present day, in order to pass the test, have to take a leading part in the less important aspects of the movement and get a conviction without trying to secure a release by an able defence in court. So long as this mentality lasts, there is nothing to be said against it being a necessary phase in the process of evolution and not without its good but in those days, the honour lay not in securing a conviction but in going to the front line of the attack and when arrested, coming back unscathed tearing off the net of the executive by using their law against them and throwing their plans overboard without jeopardising one's honour and public reputation. The attitude found a lucid expression in the celebrated eulogy pronounced upon Sri Aurobindo by the poet-seer Rabindranath, in his celebrated poem beginning with 'অরবিন্দ, রবীন্দ্রের লহ নমস্কার'। 'O Aurobindo, take the salutation of Rabindranath' on the occasion of the 'Bande Mataram' Prosecution Trial. It was considered to be enough for the purpose if a man

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was prepared to suffer for the cause and above all, if he had that divine stamp on his person marking him out as the chosen man to lead the movement. It is for the nation to judge seriously whether, in the light of this view point, the time has not come to modify their attitude with regard to this question of public defence in a political trial. This does not mean that the man should always seek shelter under mean subterfuges and try always to be on the safe side, which is more appropriate to the mentality of moderate thought and which the nationalism of those days condemned in no uncertain terms, but it does mean that an earnest worker and specially the brain, the motor-power, of the movement should not give up any of the weapons of war, offensive or defensive, only to please the unenlightened rank and file of the movement, who can never be initiated into all the tactics of the fight to be able to understand every move in the game before it is played.

The great influence exercised by Sri Aurobindo on the general public of Bengal was first demonstrated at the Midnapur Session

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of the Bengal Provincial Conference, where the Moderates combined to try their strength with and, if possible, to crush, the growing spirit of nationalism in the country. It is very unfortunate for a country specially circumstanced like India that persons should be actuated by ambition, fame and love of power and come to the public field to organise a party to suit their private ends and sacrifice the best interests of the country and seek to coerce the growing national spirit, thereby directly or indirectly siding with the bureaucracy even with the best intentions of fighting the government if only to usurp the government for themselves. Considering the complexities of the situation in the midst of which India has been placed, it would have been better if the exponents of moderatism had retired from the public field of politics leaving it in charge of the more advanced party, restricting their activities to philanthropic work and social service. Unfortunately, they have always played into the hands of the government, which has never been slow to profit by the peculiar nature of this triangular contest, which is always a

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dangerous game, from the standpoint of efficient tactics and should, as far as possible, be avoided.

Not much is known to us personally about the Midnapore Conference but it is a matter of common knowledge that the nationalists, though forming the majority, seceded from the Conference and held an independent conference of their own with Sri Aurobindo as the President and gave a definite lead to the country on a basis of self-reliance and self-help, the moderate conference being thrown into the shade. The vanity of the moderates was wounded so much in consequence and they even became vindictive in such a degree that one of their prominent men sought to sully the fair name of Sri Aurobindo and endanger his safety by giving evidence against him in the sensational State-trial at Alipore sometime after, simply because he felt that the discomfiture of his party was solely due to the influence and inspiration of Sri Aurobindo.

The poison of this conflict spread all over India and everywhere there was a sharp cleavage between the moderates and the nationalist party of those days and the two parties began

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preparing in right earnest for the great Kurukshettra or the Holy war of Principles, which was finally to decide the future and the nature of the Indian fight for Liberties. The question at issue was whether the Indian people, following the lead of the moderates, should walk in the foot-steps of the Britisher to be held in perpetual tutelege and be satisfied with the crumbs offered contemptuously in gracious condescension by the British bureaucrat or they would learn to stand on their own legs, find on the issues fountain of strength within themselves, organise their strength and resources, stand for their own culture and traditions, and fight the issue to its logical conclusion depending solely on God and their own right hand. Never before in India was there such an intense enthusiasm while the two parties were busy claiming their own recruits, preaching their ideals through the press and the platform, the moderates depending on their intriguing tactics to baffle the direct attack of the nationalists, and evidence proved later on that there were some among the prominent moderates who were

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secretly conspiring with the government to prevail upon them to remove some of the prominent nationalists from the field of their activity, so that they might win an easy victory for themselves with an implicit understanding with the government that they would do all in their power to bring the strayed flock of the people under the fold of the good shepherd, the government. The two outstanding personalities in this great war on the nationalist side were Loke. Tilak and Sri Aurobindo and they successfully established Nationalism as the creed of the people in their fight for freedom and when the great tussle came in 1907 in the "Sleepy Hollow" of Surat, the stronghold of the moderate autocrat of those days, Sir Pherojeshah Mehta, called the Lion of Bombay, the nationalists rendered a good account of themselves and won the great fight to the eternal honour of the principles for which they had fought. It would be out of place in a psychological life-sketch of Sri Aurobindo to trace the full course of that conflict, only it is to be mentioned that Sri Aurobindo intimately known to both Maharastra and Bengal, the two

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leading provinces, surcharged with nationalism in those days, had a lot of work to do in the way of influencing the thought-currents of the nationalist representatives and in settling upon the future programme of the party and re-organising the All-India nationalist party on a sound basis. Considering the peculiar circumstances of the country, the party chose to work without any party-labels, or establishing offices and creating office-bearers and the main work which they had settled upon doing was the education of the public in the ideas of nationalism, allowing those ideas to crystallise in their own way in the form of national institutions, the main party choosing to act merely in an advisory and helping capacity, leaving the institutions quite free to grow in their own way and not seeking to stifle them by a system of rigid discipline, supervision and interference.

When Sri Aurobindo returned to Bengal the wreath of wild olive, the crowning reward of the victor in the Olympian games, was already on his brow and he, who had gone to the fight

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as the leader of Bengal, came back as the all-India leader of nationalism.

With the closing of this Battle of Kurukshetra, ending so successfully from a spiritual point of view, although equally disastrously from the material outlook as it proved afterwards like the historic war of Kurukshetra, we close this chapter, reserving the story of his gathering in the fruits of the struggle for the next.

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CHAPTER IV.

LIFE IN BENGAL—*(Contd.)*

The nationalist party went back to their respective provinces to preach the truth which they had received by virtue of the churning of the ocean at Surat and for a short period, they all earnestly set about educating the country in the cult of a robust nationalism, the two provinces of Maharastra and Bengal taking the lead in the movement, which could go so far as to take up the work of solid notional reconstruction as a practical programme and begin that work along certain definite lines, while the other provinces were mainly busy in infusing the potent seed of the idea of nationalism in the people of their respective provinces. The columns of the *Bande Mataram* day after day were full of prophetic utterances with regard to the storm that was coming and warned the people betimes to take time by the forelock, to conserve the seeds of national life in the hearts of the people and to come

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forward bravely to meet the storm and withstand its onset with heads erect, allowing it to blow against their faces, thereby infusing strength, courage and nerves into them. Sri Aurobindo had the clear insight of the seer and the astute, practical politician to recognise that the government would never be a silent on-looker of the impeteous rush of the high-tide of nationalism without trying its level best to crush the movement, if it could, by relentless repression and that the moderate loyalists who had lost in the great-war would be too willing to rally round the banner of the bureaucracy and betray the interests of the country by vilifying and persecuting the accredited representatives of the people. We yet remember those memorable articles in the *Bande Mataram*, entitled 'Death or Life' in which the case for nationalism was put forcibly and logically before the country. The highly spiritual articles on nationalism from the pen of Sri Aurobindo filled the pages of the *Bande Mataram* day after day which served to keep up the national spirit to a high pitch without in the least minimising the dangers

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and the difficulties of the struggle. He used always to dilate on, amplify and illustrate one central idea if the nation was really in earnest about securing its freedom it must not shrink from paying the full price for freedom, that must be demanded of the nation by the divine Mother and this price should be paid not in a calculating mercenary spirit of give-and-take but in a spirit of sacrifice, of unstinted and absolute surrender at the altar of the Mother, reserving nothing for oneself and not claiming anything in return for the supreme spiritual consummation. The extraordinary influence that Sri Aurobindo wielded over the freedom-loving section of the Indian people in those days through his writings in the columns of the *Bande Mataram* is best illustrated by the fact that from the distant Province of Guzrat were published the booklets 'Reprints from the *Bande Mataram*' containing all the most important articles from the pen of Sri Aurobindo and these had an extensive circulation all over India.

The storm was not long in coming, the nationalist party being permitted to continue

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its work unimpeded in the field only so long as the government had not fixed upon its *modus operandi* and before barely five months were out, the government launched upon its career of repression, unstinted and ruthless, which swept over the country like a storm indeed, practically uprooting all the big trees that towered high overhead and for a time laying nationalism low, although the nation in its darkest hour, in the midst of despair, agony and distress, never forgot the sacred teaching which had been instilled into its heart through the pregnant columns of the nationalist newspapers like *Bande Mataram*, always sticking fast to that faith that something good would ultimately come out of evil, that suffering and persecution undergone for a sacred cause could never be in vain and that even the darkest cloud had a silver lining in it and strong in this faith, the nation waited, watched and endured. It is needless to add that in consequence of this repression all the prominent leaders of thought in India found themselves either in jail or in exile and Lok. Tilak and Sri Aurobindo found themselves secured in the toils of the bureaucracy

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and lodged in Jail, the former being speedily sentenced and sent to a long term of exile in Burma and lodged in Mandalay Jail in North Burma and the latter, as an under-trial prisoner, shut up in the Alipore Central Jail, Calcutta for full one year, during which the historic state-trial dragged on its weary length at Alipore. But before we come to this part of the narrative, we have to trace the circumstances under which Sri Aurobindo was arrested and in which the highly subtle intentions of the then ruling bureaucracy were clearly brought to light, as it was proved that they wanted to kill two birds at one stroke, as will appear from the following narrative.

A fine band of the youths of Bengal, strongly imbued with a rich romanticism and a fine psychical impulse, so characteristic of the Bengalee temperament, who had drunk deep of the philosophy of nationalism preached by Sri Aurobindo, although they were as yet too young to understand and assimilate its high spiritual tone, based as it was intrinsically on a deep realisation, had waited on Sri Aurobindo, sat at his feet in loving homage in an attitude

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of devoted surrender, which they had no opportunity and no special inclination to culture as yet, and had received the touch of divine inspiration, which had worked on them as a secret force inpelling them to do mighty things, which were undreamed of and unheard of in the annals of Bengal. They went divinely mad with that touch and did not know where they were drifting and what they were doing. This band of fine Bengalee youths, headed by Sj. Barindra Kumar Ghosh, of revolutionary fame, now a recluse at Pondichery, receiving his lessons in practical yoga from Sri Aurobindo, started a movement among the youths of the country for the organisation of a secret revolutionary party in the land. This party preached its own revolutionary ideas based on a spiritual outlook on life through the columns of its organ, 'the Yugantar' a vernacular weekly, in a frank and outspoken manner, which brought down the wrath of the bureaucracy, and printer after printer was arrested and sent to long terms of imprisonment. The youths of the country rallied round its banner in large numbers, with the result that the

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atmosphere was surcharged with revolutionary ideas. Sometime after, they gathered in a small band and leaving the charge of the paper in the hands of another group, went out to establish a secret society for the purpose of organising the country with the object of using bombs, dynamite and fire-arms as a first instalment of national preparation for an armed revolution in the country to secure political independence. This party tried unsuccessfully to wreck the train of the then Lieutenant-Governor by the use of dynamite and among other things, mistakenly murdered two European ladies by a bomb, which they threw at a carriage in the darkness of the night at Muzzaffarpore in April, 1908, mistaking it to be the carriage of Mr. Kingsford, the then sessions judge of the district, who had sent to jail many of the members of the party when he was the Chief Presidency Magistrate in Calcutta. It is not the intention to trace the course of this movement in this short essay. The climax was reached by this incident and early in May 1908, the police searched many houses in Calcutta, including the central bomb factory

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in the outskirts of the city and arrested many youngmen including Sri Aurobindo, whom they considered to be the brain, the motor-power behind the whole organisation and the ringleader of the conspiracy. What was really the matter was that Sri Aurobindo had opened up new and as yet unexplored avenues for the self-fulfilment of the nation, which had electrified the whole country and inspired the people with hope and confidence so that they had been roused from their long and stuporous slumber and had already stood up determined to suffer and undergo the toils of the long and arduous journey in its march to freedom with a cheerful countenance. Every one had begun to feel that the path that lay open before them was the only high-road to the goal of freedom which they cherished so much in their heart of hearts. The path was one of absolute self-surrender to the will of the Divine Mother, to stake one's all for the sake of national service without any reservation, and never to shrink from suffering in the name of the country and the readiness to give the toll for freedom with a cheerful heart. According to Sri Aurobindo's

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teaching, the creation of this spirit in the people was what really mattered and all else would naturally follow as a corrollary to this acquisition. The government that keeps a people under subjection is not likely to allow these de-hypnotising influences to work without check and although there is nothing in the law to coerce or crush the people or to punish the soul of the movement, the executive can always devise illusive, wily means to cause the movement to miscarry and it was from the dictation of some such policy like this that the government arrested Sri Aurobindo on such a trumped-up charge as the instigator of violence, murder and dacoity in the name of securing the liberties of the people. He had certainly infused a new life into the nation and the inspiration of the people also spiritually emanated from him but that is not a crime punishable by law and the authorities of those days stood exposed before the country, when this view was finally upheld by the trying Judge just after one year and Sri Aurobindo was honourably acquitted.

Into the details of this dramatic state-trial at Alipore we need not enter, though it would

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afford an illuminating study into the inner psychology of the Bengalee people, the ways and methods of the Police and other cognate matters, simply because Sri Aurobindo, although he was hauled up as the ring-leader of the conspiracy, could not be implicated in that case. It looked as if the records of a contemplated sedition-case against Sri Aurobindo at some future date had been tucked on to the exhibits of the conspiracy case simply with the object of expediting matters according to the convenience of the executive. The two parts of the trial, like oil and water would not mix and Mr. Eardly Norton, the prosection counsel, had to depend on his masterly oratory, straining his powers to their utmost, to make them appear as components of an organic whole and whenever he would fail, he would attribute his failure not to the sheer absurdity of the task he had been called upon to perform but to Sri Aurobindo's astute cleverness, superhuman genius and his extraordinary ability in taking precautions beforehand to baffle the attempt of the Police to bring any charge home to him. The Police of the day also tried to supply the missing-link

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in their own way by putting some defamatory and slanderous statements into the mouth of an accused who had turned an approver, Narendranath Gossain, who was shot dead in Alipore Jail by Sjs. Kanailal Dutta and Satyendranath Bose, the one belonging to French Chandernagore and the other to Midnapore. The Sessions Judge could not accept his statement as legally valid on the ground that no opportunity was offered to the accused to cross-examine the approver and it was accordingly thrown out according to the law of evidence of the day. Failing in this, the Police made a desperate effort to implicate him by producing a mysterious post-card in court, the celebrated "Sweets' Letter" alleged to be written by Barindra, the accredited leader of the revolutionary group, to his elder brother, Sri Aurobindo, saying that that was the most opportune moment to distribute "sweets" (alleged to mean bombs) all over the country. The Post card was signed 'Barindra K. Ghose' and was alleged to have been intercepted on its way to Bombay, where Sri Aurobindo had gone in connection with the Congress. The

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letter was so palpably absurd on the very face of it that the assessors in the case called it a base forgery of the Police, and although the trying Sessions Judge did not go so far, he disbelieved it as having any evidenciary value at all. This was the last straw of the police and this failing, there was nothing to connect Sri Aurobindo with the conspiracy. Then there was that vast mass of written matter, printed or in manuscript, composed of private correspondence, articles for the Press, philosophical writings, newspaper articles and miscellaneous matters, which were put in as evidence to prove Sri Aurobindo's mentality on the ground that they were all written by him. Mr. Beachcroft, the trying judge, had to declare that they were thoroughly unoffending articles inasmuch as according to British Jurisprudence it was not a crime to preach the ideal of freedom which constituted the glory of the British people. He had, therefore, to decide along with the assessors that Sri Aurobindo was not guilty and no case had been proved against him. It is needless to say that the police were highly disappointed although Mr. Breachcroft, as the

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trying Judge, had some kind words to say about them.

The extraordinary popularity of Sri Aurobindo among the Indian People was proved when the people responded without fear of police harassment to the call of his sister, Sm. Sarojini Ghose, to organise a Defence Fund to meet the expenses for his defence. From everywhere in Bengal, even from the remotest villages, contributions came pouring in, mainly subscribed by the poor agricultural and labouring population of Bengal and from the educated community all over India, and even there were some remittances from some European friends, who had been his class-fellows, from the continent, from America and from Australia. During the course of the trial, in a case of the utmost complexity, money had to be spent like running-water, even though the chief Defence Counsel, the late Mr. C. R. Das of blessed memory, who was a personal friend of Sri Aurobindo, was working without any fee. And all this money was contributed ungrudgingly by the people of the land, proverbially poor and halfstarved, thus proving how much they can feel and do

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for him whom they know to be their well-wisher, their protector, guide and helper, even though they may not come into personal touch with him in the whole course of their life, thus proving that the Indian nation has never been a bankrupt in gratitude and can stand its own ground in that against all the nations of the earth.

Any description of Sri Aurobindo's trial will be incomplete without a passing reference to the masterly defence of his case by the late Mr. C. R. Das, so full of deep insight and luminous penetrativeness by which the subtly woven net of the Prosecution story was torn in shreds, leading to the naked exposure of their ignoble methods and the collapse of the case against the chief accused. We wish we could quote in full his celebrated, poetically inspired and romantic peroration, in which he identified himself, in the spirit, with his client and spoke the ever-memorable words, fit to be engraven in letters of gold, so rich with the divine inspiration of the poet and the seer. Never in human history was such an inspired seer called upon to defend such a devoted votary

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of the Mother, the two united in the Spirit as one and divided in the movement as two thereby reproducing the Divine Lila in life. Sri Aurobindo has himself mentioned with regard to this defence by his friend that as soon as he saw him in court, his mind was completely set at rest, as he saw the Vasudeva (the Divine Guide and Helper) in him and tore off all the papers, containing his instructions for the defence of his case for he was convinced in his inmost soul that that was no longer necessary and he watched, with keen interest, the Divine will unrolled through Mr. C. R. Das in the conduct of the case, thus demonstrating that Mr. C. R. Das had completely surrendered himself to the Divine Power as a conscious agent and had been marked as a chosen instrument by the divine power both for the conduct of that case and for all time to come, mainly because of his selfless and devoted love for a dear friend in distress.

As we have said already, Sri Aurobindo came out a free man on the 5th of May, 1909, just on the very day on which he had been arrested a year ago.

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CHAPTER V.

LIFE IN BENGAL—*(Contd.)*

Sri Aurobindo came out of Jail a different man in his spiritual outlook on life from what he had been when he went inside Jail a year ago. This does not mean that he had changed his opinion and felt that the work he was doing was no longer needed but that he had received the new spiritual light of the synthetic sadhana, the pursuit of which was divinely ordained to be his life-mission. When a man has been ear-marked by the Divine Power to fulfil certain great ends in the path of the spiritual fulfilment of humanity, he is not free to act in his own way, according to his egoistic impulses, the impulse and craving of the hour, but he has to harmonise consciously his every move in line with the divine intention in the movement. His freedom consists in a willing submission and surrender, by which he can enjoy the thrill and intensity of the supreme delight that manifests itself

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everywhere in the divine play of the movement. This was no mere philosophic sentimentalism but a revealed truth which Sri Aurobindo had got in its rudimentary outlines, while he was staying in the Alipore Jail, which he had been called upon to develop, and for which work, as he has himself said, it was ordained he would be taken out of Jail by the Divine Power acting through the whole show of the sensational state-trial.

The nature of the new Sadhana that he had received inside the Jail-walls is not definitely known, but so far as we can understand, his arrest synchronises with the close of the cycle that he was practising, into the secrets of which he had been initiated during his stay in Western India and a new world of divine possibilities opened up before him and the Yoga Sadhana, the seed of which was in Bengal, the Sadhana of Sri Ramkrishna and Prabhupad Bijoykrishna Goswami, stood revealed before him in all their divine splendours and the divinely ordained task that was set before him, and which he willingly accepted to perform in all submission and humility,

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was to combine these two channels of spiritual life-manifestation into one grandiose current of infinite possibilities for the future and as usual, he staked his all for the final fulfilment of this divinely ordained mission, in which, he was convinced, lay the seed of immortality for his nation and for humanity.

It was such a man with such a luminous revelation and with such strong grit and determination, so unyielding and so uncompromising, yet a child before his Divine master, who came out of Jail to lay the foundation of that great work in Bengal and in India—the work of national reconstruction on a solid spiritual foundation in its universal aspect, deeply instinct with a clear message for humanity. The immediate result was the publication of two weekly organs, one in English and the other in Bengali—the Karmayogin and the Dharma, setting forth in clear terms the message of the new truth which the nation was called upon to develop and assimilate according to its own spiritual fitness and capacity.

It must be confessed that for the majority of the young generation inured to western ways

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of thinking or at most who had developed a religious mentality, which, in the present stage of evolution, has practically nothing in common with spirituality, the teachings of the two organs of Sri Aurobindo constituted a bitter pill to swallow. Most would come forward to read, coming out as they did from the greatest man of the age, and very few could understand what was written there; some could go as far as to imitate its phraseology in their conversation and writings but very few could come and sit at his feet to receive the new message. Those who went in for extreme politics and loved him very much, thought of utilising his sufferings, sacrifice and devotion in the cause of political evolution of the country and went so far as to accept him as the recognised leader of the country, and work in his name, without caring at all for his spritual sadhana which they did not care to understand. In that general confusion of thought-currents, he could get hold of some, however, who were ready to take the sadhana by making an absolute self-surrender, and were ready to learn and be moulded into shape

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according to the divine will working through Sri Aurobindo and with his new band, he silently laid the foundation of his great spiritual work in Bengal which is still unmanifest, because the time for that is not yet but the signs are not wanting of the preparation behind the scenes for that great spiritual revival, which will some day sweep the country, beginning from Bengal and overflooding all India and thence the world in the name of Sri Aurobindo, the founder and initiator of that great movement.

He came out of Jail when the older notionalist leaders of Bengal had been deported under Bengal Regulation III of 1818 and some had gone to voluntary exile in Europe, leaving their country to moderate leaders with practically no following in the country, the nation as a whole directly going over to the nationalist camp in consequence of the repression that had swept over the country and the educative value of the great state-trial as a healthy nationalist propapanda was also inestimable. Although there was no practical work in the country at the time and there was no demonstration in the way of an agitation, still Sri Aurobindo had the keen

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inner vision to see that the heart of the nation was sound and it was at that moment, so to speak, a reservoir of a great pent-up energy, bred of deep suppressed emotionalism, which could be turned to good account. The scattered remnants of the nationalist camp came to him and ask him to restart the daily nationalist organ, the 'Bande Mataram' which had been suppressed, and its press seized, because of an article entitled "The Traitor in Camp", that appeared in the paper, which the authorities of the day considered to be objectionable. Sri Aurobindo, who had got a definite lead from his inner Guru with regard to his future plan of work refused to accede to that request of his friends and stuck exclusively to the Karmayogin and the Dharma. Thus the political work of Sri Aurobindo after his release differed essentially from his work in the old 'Bande-Mataram' days. Formerly, he was perhaps practising the Sadhana for the sake of an ulterior object in view, to use the clarified vision, the energy and the power he acquired in the course of the Sadhana in the practical field of work, to secure the political

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salvation of the country, of course with the sanction and under the direction of his Divine Guru, so that in the new line of Sadhana the spiritual connection between the individual and the collective should be more securely established. In the new plane in which he had come to work, the establishment of a secure spiritual foundation on a basis of synthetic yoga had become the supreme consideration and all else, including the passing phase of political evolution, had become secondary. Formerly, he had inspired the people with an emotional fervour and enthusiasm, spiritual in colouring, no doubt, but differing essentially from spirituality, which must be acquired by deep devotion and strenuous practice of yoga, and had infused new strength into them, but it was not theirs and it evaporated as soon as that work was done. This phase had reached its climax in the Surat Congress, and after the fruits of that historic struggle had been gathered in, it was ordained that that path had to be abandoned for a deeper Sadhana, as it had done its work and was no longer necessary. In his new plane, Sri Aurobindo laid the

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foundation secure for that new Sadhana, proved to a chosen few fit to receive the new Light, as conclusively as they demanded how for those, who could make the absolute spiritual self-surrender to the Jagatguru within them and without, victory in any field, sanctioned by the Jagatguru, was sure and easy. His political activity in this second period had thus a twofold significance : first to train up a small band of chosen spiritual disciples, so that they could be strong and fit *adhars* (receptacles) for his great Sadhana and then, with the help of these ardent souls, to secure an easy victory in the political field, every one of the group consciously working as the chosen instrument of the Jagatguru, so that when that work was done, the faith in the new Sadhana had been securely established among his disciples and the work stood as a monumental miracle before the future generation of political workers, none being able to gauge its full divine significance, and very few understanding the inner secret of the victory.

Before we come to narrate that historic struggle, that supreme consummation of

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Sri Aurobindo's political life, when his great mission in the political field of the country was accomplished, he having created a race of spiritual descendants, and the psychological moment came for him to retire to continue the sadhana in higher, planes of consciousness in the interest of humanity and the worlds, we are bound to say a few words about the substantial work done by his new organs of spiritual Nationalism—the Karmayogin and the Dharma—during the four months he had before him before that great struggle.

The ideal that Sri Aurobindo had set before himself in undertaking the publication of those two organs was at once spiritual and cultural. He has himself told us through the columns of those papers that the *Tapasya* of the race which had made it so great in the past, had been all spent up and its impelling force, its dynamism had gone out of it and in consequence the nation had sunk to the utmost depth of degradation, having registered a spiritual bankruptcy and was eking out a miserable existence, holding fast to the dead conventionalism, out of which the soul had fled and regulating

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life by a dull, mechanical standard of a social code of life. If the nation was to be saved out of the threatened ruin, an earnest and devoted attempt should be made to rediscover the lost fields of spiritual *sadhana*, practise and assimilate the truths to build up the life and establish the soul of the nation on a sound footing. Side by side with this preparation to lay the foundation deep into the core of spirituality, a wide synthesis of the divergent branches of Indian culture should be attempted by which what was rotten in those systems should be rejected and only those elements which could stand the test of time and serve the necessity of the nation were to be conserved. It was in this wide and liberal spirit that the two papers set about week after week to sift all existing facts and data with regard to *sadhana* and culture and build up a new synthetic culture, suited to time-conditions and psychological necessity, illuminated by touches of personal self-realisation. Only the leading incidents and events from current politics were selected and commented on in the light of advanced nationalism, the leading articles being mostly

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devoted to the immediate object in view, the creation of a nucleus for the study and practice of *yoga* and the elaboration of a synthetic system of culture, the Karmayogin being more philosophical and the Dharma more practical in its directions on *yoga* suited to the advanced spiritual requirements of Bengal, which had developed much along old lines, which it was now thought necessary to unify and synthetise—the *Sadhna* of Sri Ram Krishna and of Bijoy Krishna Goswami. During this period, Sri Aurobindo preached his new message to his countrymen surcharged with his deep spirituality and his devoted dependence on God-consciousness, of which he was too full and on the other hand, of his indomitable fearlessness and defiance of the then ruling executive. His words, as he spoke then, rang out clear and true and inspired his audience with courage and hope. He spoke in very strong terms on the Bengal Deportations, which had come about when he was in jail severely condemned and criticised the utterance of the then L.-G. of Bengal, spoke on the right of free association, which the executive was then

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seeking to crush, always dwelling on seeing the hand of God working in the movement through all its phases and exhorted the people to stand shoulder to shoulder in the struggle and feel the divine pulsation beating in their hearts infusing courage into them in their struggle with the bureaucracy and exhorted them to suffer in the name of freedom, relying on the Divine Helper. With regard to his conception of Nationalism, he declared in one of his lectures that formerly it had been a religion a creed and a faith to him but now it was a *sadhana*, a process of divine realisation. This work had gone on for four months when he was called upon to lead the Nationalist Party in the coming session of the Bengal Provincial Conference at Hooghly, in September, 1909.

Even since 1907, the Congress machinery had been boycotted by the Nationalists choosing to go as delegates to the Indian National Congress, as they refused to recognise its representative character and had strong objections against signing a dishonourable creed, formerly passed at the moderate convention held after the

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famous Surat split. In consequence, the Congress machinery was in the hands of the moderates, and although the people were deeply imbued with the spirit of Nationalism, still the deliberations of the congress and conference being formal in character, they were generally stamped with the moderate loyalism characteristic of the moderate leaders, who were always afraid of repression. Hooghly was to Bengal in those days what Surat was to Bombay—an out-and-out 'sleepy Hollow' with no political life in the District at all. The Reception Committee that was formed consisted of moderates so that the rules that they framed and the Draft Resolutions that they passed at the sitting of their executive body were extremely retrograde in character and repugnant to the sentiments of the nationalist. Alone and single-handed, Sri Aurobindo was called upon to break the clique of the moderate caucus who had combined to prevent even Sri Aurobindo being returned as a delegate and were using unfair means to chuck out men of pronounced nationalistic views from the list of the delegates and return their own men instead from all Districts. Nothing daunted, Sri Aurobindo began

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his vigorous campaign to defeat the moderates hollow and capture the entire machinery, speedily recognised the all-Bengal Nationalist Association, chucked out the age-limit of 21 for delegates from the delegation-certificate issued by the reception committee, printed the certificates for his own party from his own press sanctioned, on his own account, in direct violation of the Risley's circular, prohibiting students to attend or take part in political meetings, the election of students as delegates for the conference in open violation of the rules of the Reception Committee advised nationalist professors of colleges to break the Risley's circular and preside at meetings to elect delegates and finally advised his Nationalist followers at Hooghly to organise a students volunteer corps in open protest against the rules of the Reception Committee who had refused to enlist students even as volunteers on the ground that it was not permissible by the Risley's circular to allow students to serve as volunteers. He also revised the Draft Resolutions of the Reception Committee, printed his own counter-resolutions against each of them and circulated it to the

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Nationalists through the columns af the Karmayogin. Thus organised, he went to attend the conference. It will be noticed that in the eye of Sri Aurobindo the straight road to the Temple of Freedom had been closed by the erection of certain illegal and unconstitutional barriers which he knocked down and removed without much fuss, as soon as he felt that in the light of the Vision of Truth that was his, he was doing just the right thing at the right moment. This speedy sure grasp of the situation and equally sure and effective remedy prescribed at the opportune moment constitute the acid test of true leadership. It was highly telling and it is interesting to note that there was not a single voice to protest against it inasmuch as everyone instinctively felt, not excluding his opponents, that he was doing just the right thing. The success at the conference was equally marvellous, all being magnetised by his very presence and there was no opposition worth the name. At first, the Moderates tried to practise some unworthy tricks when they were caught and hooted down and at last, through the intervention of Sri Aurobindo as the peace-maker,

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order and tranquillity prevailed. It is worthy of note that all the Nationalist Resolutions were passed at that conference and the draft of the Reception Committee was shelved.

To those, who had anything to do with the conference, it was proved beyond the shadow of a doubt that a great spiritual force was working there and everyone felt assured that all opposition, in the face of that great force, was bound to break down, no matter whether it came from the bureaucracy or from the moderate cliques.

The lesson of this conference was twofold : First it had prevailed upon the moderates to surrender unconditionally to the decision of the Nationalists recognising the moral superiority of the latter led by Sri Aurobindo, and their own powerlessness when they could not use their undergound tactics ; and, secondly the supreme fact that an inevitable split had been avoided through the intervention of the leader of the powerful party acting as the peace-maker, thus giving the lie direct to the allegations of the executive and the moderate clique that Sri Aurobindo was at the root of all disorder

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and violence, it was surely a step in advance of the Conference at Midnapore and even of the Congress at Surat inasmuch as it prevented a split and proved the masterly tact of Sri Aurobindo in settling a point of vital difference to the satisfaction of the opponent.

Then Sri Aurobindo went out on tour in Eastern Bengal, delivered his memorable speech at the Jhalakati District Conference, so rich in divine fire, so inspiring, so full of spirituality and so pregnant with deep meaning. In that speech, he emphasised that God was the leader of the movement and no personality however great, and therefore the movement could not stop even if all the prominent workers were arrested and put in Jail, adding in conclusion that what was wanted was to develop the capacity of suffering in people, and gladly undergone for the sake of the country. He then came back to Calcutta and continued to publish the papers for nearly a year or so and when finally the call of the Jagatguru came for him to retire pursue his *yoga* in seclusion, away from the field of his political labours, he retired to Pondicharry in Southern India, where he is still

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living as a recluse, pursuing his *yoga* along new and unknown lines of development, carrying on his spiritual research for the purpose of rediscovering and rebuilding the ancient works of the Truth, now lost and lying in ruins and has established a Sadhanasram (Yogic College) when he has got some ardent pupils of both sexes, both Indian and European.

The ways of the bureaucracy are highly subtle and illusive. After Sri Aurobindo had gone, whom, there is reason to suppose, they were contemplating to depart under Regulation III of 1818, as he has himself mentioned in his "An open Letter to my countrymen" published in the Karmayogin, commonly known as his last political will and Testament, they issued a warrant against him on a charge of sedition, knowing perfectly well that he was at Pondichary practising *Yoga* and issued a proclamation against him as an absconder, thus trying to discredit him in the eyes of the people as a public leader. As his public honour was impugned Sri Aurobindo published an explanation in the "Madras Times", saying that he was not morally bound to appear in Court as it

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was an after-thought of the executive to start the prosecution on a trumped-up charge for the article in question 'An open letter' was perfectly innocent and secondly, he had retired from public life for the persist of *Yoga* and as such, not called upon to vindicate his public honour. The authorities went so far as to start criminal proceedings against the printer and giving six months in the lower Court, but he was finally acquitted on appeal being preferred at the High Court, thus proving the utter innocence of Sri Aurobindo and vindicating his honour and reputation as a public man, which the executive of the day had tried to impugn. Since there is no case against him and although the authorities, both here and in England occasionally bring in his name as a "Notorious Revolutionary" and "a refugee" to serve their own ends and prove that there is a wide-spread revolutionary conspiracy in the land, still it must be said that they are inwardly conscious of their weak case and use his name to serve political ends as last proof to support a tottering structure.

A word must be said in defence of his

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retirement from the field of politics as the politically minded young generation cannot understand this mentality, not being possessed of any intimate knowledge about this new *Yoga* and always confusing it with the new effete and rotten system of the old school. Nor having any data in hand to judge truly, without any spiritual experience of the new school, they are apt to suppose that Yoga is always pursued for selfish ends, for the liberation of one's individual soul and that a Yoga does not feel for others and does not sympathise with the sufferings of humanity. It is not my intention to answer these charges brought against the pursuit of Yoga in this short Essay but I do assert with all the emphasis that I can command that it is an utterly mistaken and perverted view and those who say so pass judgment without knowing anything about the aims and objects of the new *Yoga*. This *Yoga* is meant, in a word to rediscover and rebuild the inner worlds in man on a sound, stable basis so that a new creation of humanity may be possible, self balanced on an enduring foundation and not propped up by a patch work of

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compromises and exigencies of the moment as in the case with us today. Happy the race that is chosen to spare the noblest soul for a task so great and so divine, so selfless in its inception and so sublimes in its potentialities. And we must know and practise how to make, this supreme surrender in all humanity at the alter of the Divine, when He calls us to give him up, to fulfil His divine mission in the Universal and set him apart from the dust and toil of human life. The great cosmic sacrifice over which God sits as the arbiter, becomes fulfilled and complete, leading to the deliverence of the cosmic cycle and the reproduction of the Divine Man upon Earth, when such a supreme self abnegation is made by a race specially one that lives in misery, shame and degradation and has got its own wants to be removed. The Indian Nation has been called upon to develop such a spiritual outlooks to-day and the universe waits to see it fulfilled so that he who has gone away, misundertood by almost all his countrymen, may claim the *Siddhi* which is his, by virtue of his *tapasya* his devotion and through the

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blessing of his countrymen and come back with the luminous radiance shining in his face and marking him out as the Divine Man of the future, to mould the God-ordained destiny of humanity into shape.

Then word must be said about the political justification of his retirement as most of our politicals would be liable to regard the proceeding portion as an out-burst of retired sentimentalism. Sri Aurobindo, before he retired, wrote an article for the *Karmayogin*, explaining his position defining the future line of work of the Nationalist Party. In this article, he reviewed the change in the political situation that had happened in the country with the advent of fresh revolutionary activity in the land, resulting in the murder of C. I. D., Dy. Superintendent in the precints of the Calcutta High Court, which was an open challenge to the bureaucracy of the day and it was meant as as a signal that the revolutionary party would continue its activity in the future. With this menace, before the country Sri Aurobindo had to modify the activities of the Nationalist party, as he had the clear discerning judgment to

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see that a triangular contests was always stratagically dangerous and should, as far as possible, be avoided. Therefore, as the only course left open before the country he not being in a position to restrict the activities of the revolutionary party not knowing who and what they were as in the peculiar position in which the country had been forced to drive their activities underground, who had their own philosophy their own line of action and their tactics and he not feeling morally called upon to take preventive measures with regard to a movement that was the direct product of the repressive policy of the bureaucracy which had tried to strike at the root of all legitimate activity in the land as the effects of which the Nationalists had suffered most. He advised the National party to retire leaving the contest to be fought between the bureaucracy and the revolutionary party and not to take the field until the issue had been decided one way or the other. But a party could not sit idle without an active programme before it, therefore he advised them to explore in their own way, according to their own fitness,

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the possibilities of the Indian *Yoga* as a sort of National self-discipline from a practical point of view and to gather within themselves the grit and the determination and the spiritual resources of their fight—the clear discerning judgment, the capacity to think with concentration, the ability to solve intricate problems satisfactorily, the capacity to convince others of the truths they had themselves experienced,—and to establish a sort of spiritual integrity within the party, so that they could hold on together even under the severest strain of external pressure that might be put on them. They were further asked to study Indian philosophy and other serious literature, which had a great tendency in clarifying the intellect and producing a sweet balance and depth of judgment and clear vision, and he also advised them to explore the field of Indian culture, and try to establish a cultural synthesis, so as to form a stable basis for the future social superstructure that was to be built on it, and which was to be the final consummation of all their labours. The members of the Nationalist party were further advised to stick to the principles of

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Nationalism in their individual capacity, and to be centres, of radiation of spiritual Nationalism in their own sphere, so that they might grow in strength and exercise an unbounded spiritual influence over their countrymen. Beyond this, in their private life, they were left absolutely free to pursue their own avocations in life, to do social service in their own way, or to be philanthropic and charitable according to their own inclination. They were further advised not to do anything in the name of the party which was going into retirement for *sadhana*, and to wait until the call came to take the field for the fulfilment of the divine destiny. In our opinion, there was absolute justification for this retirement, and Sri Aurobindo was absolutely right even from a political point of view in retiring himself and in advising his party to retire, if we only remember the true meaning of retirement as the creation of an opportunity for inner, spiritual, self-preparation from a national point of view. The future course of political evolution in the country has conclusively proved the absolute validity of Sri Aurobindo's reasoning and judgement,

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knowing, as we do, the heavy toll that the nation has been called upon to pay, without any corresponding return, through the inexperienced outlook of its future leaders, who had not the power to understand the full meaning of this injunction coming from the seer and prophet of Nationalism, divinely endowed with the innocence and purity and the clear luminous vision of the *Yogee*.

With this vindication of Sri Aurobindo's public conduct, quite sufficient in our opinion to convince any sceptic, we close this Chapter and pass on to the little that is known regarding Sri Aurobindo's life and work at Pondicherry.

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CHAPTER VI.

LIFE IN SOUTHERN INDIA

Sri Aurobindo left for Pondicherry some time in 1910; and till the middle of 1914, nothing was known in Bengal as to the way in which he was living, or of the progress he had made in the pursuit of *Yoga*. On the 15th of August, 1914 came out his monthly Philosophical Review, "*The Arya*" attempting the widest synthesis of culture, philosophy, religion and *Yoga* i.e., a system of practical self-discipline. When it came out, it proved to the world that he had not been selfishly following the path of individual self-perfection to attain *mukti* (or liberation from bondage), but that the interest of the country was as sacred to his heart as it had been before. Of course, for those who had no faith in his *sadhana*, his ideals or his line of action, he had no message to give; but for those who had received the new *sadhana* from him and knew something of the synthetic philosophy and its importance,

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the pages of the *Arya* afforded an illuminating study, pregnant with deep spiritual meaning and full of practical directions. It will not be possible in this brief review to notice in full the significance of the *Arya*, but a few words may not be out of place here.

To understand the full force of the *sadhana* that Sri Aurobindo had been called upon to follow, it was necessary that he should retire to Southern India, the land of Sankaracharya and Ramanuj, the mighty exponents of Indian philosophy, suited to the requirements of the age in which they had lived, the atmosphere of the south being surcharged with the thought-forces created by these two divine dynamos. It was the land of Sunyam (or infinite space) divinely suited for the field of new causal creation. If we study the inner psychology of Indian history, we shall see that the highest truths have been realised in their statical essence in the snowy Himalayan Zone of the North and the causal creative *sadhana* has been accomplished in the South and the field, the land of *rupam*, (form) and Lila (Divine play in manifestation) has been in

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the land of the *Aryavarta*, the intermediate Zone. As Sri Aurobindo's *sadhana* was essentially to create a new world and a new play, the old being rotten and lying in an utterly dilapidated condition, he had to retire to the South, the Land of Vijnanam or the Causal Plant of the Truth, where Truth arranges itself in particular forms under the inner pressure of the Divine *Tapasya*.

The *Arya* represents the third phase in the life-evolution of Sri Aurobindo in which he has compressed the nectar of immortality, the source of the Vedic *Yajna* (or sacrifice), the drink of the Gods and has offered it to the divine world in humanity, so that they may be pleased and once more choose to play the divine Lila in this world, satisfied with the intense devotion of the representative man, and establish a divine humanity on earth. For seven long years Sri Aurobindo waited on, offering this same at the altar of divine humanity with the sacred land of India as the *Kshetra* for the *Yajna* (sacrifical ground). Curiously enough, the birth of the *Arya* synchronises with the beginning of the great war in Europe thus

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illustrating the truth that, when the West was busy in breaking and destroying, the East was engaged in upholding the causal Truth, and in opening the sacred fountain of life to thirsty humanity, thus indicating the line of the future evolution of humanity and the respective functions of the two master continents ; each absolutely necessary for the final consummation, the two processes being counterparts of each other.

Some have said that the *Arya* contains universal truths and does not contain any message for Indian Nationalism, but we are quite sure that those who will take the trouble to go through the magazines carefully will see that these are surcharged with the spirit of Nationalism. But there is a strongly marked difference between the Nationalism of the *Arya* and that of his older writings, the former being a natural spiritual development of the latter in its evolutionary course, and certainly wide as the poles apart from the current, popular nations about Nationalism. *Arya* is nothing if not the Scripture of Indian Nationalism thoroughly catholic and universal in its scope,

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but none the less Nationalistic; and for one, who has got the eyes to see and a clear intelligence to understand, the pages of the *Arya* are full of deep spiritual meaning and inner guidance and inspiration for a true Nationalist. In a word, the *Arya* represents Nationalism as revealed in the causal plane of reality when truth takes shape for manifestation.

The *Arya* contains among other things a highly rationalistic presentation of the philosophy of Divine Life, in which Sri Aurobindo has successfully established a universal synthesis of the different systems of Indian philosophical thought and has established it as the basis of future life-evolution, for the reproduction of a divine humanity on earth showing the practical lines along which that evolution should proceeed. Then we have got his labours in the field of Vedic research, in which he has tried to establish along independent lines, revealed to him in the pursuit of *Yoga*, by a careful and critical scrutiny, absolutely satisfying and convincing to the modern 'rational' thinker, the psychological interpretation of the Veda as a hand-book and guide to the Seeker of truths along practical

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lines of research. The truths of the Veda have well-nigh been re-discovered and are on the point of being re-established on a secure basis, which will serve to show the way of divine evolution to humanity and will stand as a living monument of India's contribution to the spiritual culture of humanity, embracing in its scope the expression of life in its widest form. Thirdly, we have got from him the masterly presentation of his *Yogic* philosophy in his 'Synthesis of *Yoga*' in which he has surveyed the vast field of *Yogic* research, for which the genius and the soil of India have been most fit, has examined every system scrutinisingly with his supreme, critical judgment, has discarded all by-paths, and non-essential lines of development, has seized on the central idea of each system in vogue, and has carefully synthetised and harmonised these essentials to evolve his own system of the new *Yoga* of life. As a masterly philosophical exposition this is supremely convincing even to the most sceptical of our westernised by-products, and will rank the highest in the domain of world-psychology as a branch of theoretical knowledge. But

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not in this mainly as affording an intellectual treat to the educated lies the chief importance and significance of his synthesis of *Yoga*. It is meant to serve as a practical manual to those who have been initiated into the mysteries of the spiritual *sadhana* as the fountain-source of Indian nationalism of the universal type in the name of India, the establishment of the *Mahabharata* or Greater India in the name of Mother Ind. Thus considered, in its practical aspect of *sadhana* for the building up of the new or divine humanity, this exposition stands unique in the cultural evolution of the world. The pages are full of illustrations from personal experiences in the course of *Yoga*, pointing out the dangers of the path which the *Sadhak* is likely to meet with in the pursuit of his *sadhana*, and giving clear hints as to how he is to overstep those barriers and be successful in his pursuit.

Fourthly, we have got his masterly commentary on the two celebrated Upanishads, in the course of which he has elaborated the synthetic need of the ideals presented in the Upanishads, so characteristic of the Indian system of thought, and has supplied the missing links

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with a view to make them understood to modern readers, not inured to the intuitive mode of thinking prevalent in ancient days, based on a process of self-realisation and inner culture. In this connection, we have to note his Essays on the Gita, in which he has tried to remove some of the confusions of thought in current opinions regarding that national scripture.

He began his 'Defence of Indian Culture' which he left unfinished towards the middle of the seventh and last year, when he left off publishing the *Arya*, the spiritual necessity for that work according to him having ceased, and he soared to higher heights in search of unknown Truth, with the object of bringing it down to humanity ; then it was no longer possible for him to look to other things. But before he left his work, he had thoroughly established the supreme excellence of Indian culture by reviewing the whole field of Sanskrit Literature and the progress of the fine arts in India. In this connection, his "Renaissance in India" may be mentioned as a masterly presentation of the potential truths in course of manifestation to-day through the spiritual life-movement in India.

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Nor was his work in the *Arya* limited exclusively to things Indian, for he also surveyed the whole range of western culture in its various aspects, and noticed the points of excellence as also its drawbacks. His 'Ideal of Human Unity' is an elaborate treatise on historical philosophy with the clear vision of the seer and prophet, noticing the possibilities of a psychological unity and conditions under which it may be fructified. His appreciative review on 'English Poems' and his estimate of the Philosophy of Heraclitus and of the Nietzschean Superman may be mentioned on this connection.

This will prove what a vast field he had surveyed in the course of the seven years during which he continued to publish his *Arya*, and we can well agree that he had reaped a rich harvest for his countrymen and humanity at large, who were left free to drink deep of the waters of that spiritual fountain of life-immortality, and grow strong and living for all time to come.

The *Arya*, then, constitutes the last bequeathment to humanity, to those who would be following him in the path of his *sadhana*, in

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that particular phase (or plane) of his life-evolution on its onward spiritual march, which has just closed on us. We have been called upon to purge our sins and spiritually purify ourselves thoroughly by drinking deep of the truth contained in the pages of the *Arya* by meditating on it with an intensive *Tapasya* and by assimilating it as the very marrow and bone of our life, so that we may be fit in our inmost heart to receive him when he comes to work in the field as the Divine Man, after attaining the perfection of the *Yoga* and bringing down the world of the truth for which he has soared to the highest plane like an Eagle, as a flood of light on humanity to lead it onward in its spiritual progress for its final liberation and for the reproduction of the Superman or Divine man upon earth.

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CHAPTER VII.

SOME ASPECTS OF HIS SYNTHETIC PHILOSOPHY AND 'SADHANA'.

We shall say a few words about Sri Aurobindo's synthetic philosophy and his *sadhana* in this Chapter. It will not be possible for us to dwell on these subjects in detail within the short compass of this life-sketch.

The speciality of his philosophical system is that he has wanted to establish the possibility of a life divine for humanity as a practical basis for existence, and he has gone into the root of the matter to find out what are the elements that constitute divinity in man. He is not satisfied with the practising of an ideal merely for the ideal elevation of humanity, but he has reduced his philosophy into a practical system. He goes into the whole range of the Indian philosophical systems, expounds their prominent doctrines in the light of experience, and then establishes the necessity of proceeding to his philosophy of Life Divine for the future

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consummation of humanity. The evolution of humanity is progressive, new truths are being thrown up from the region of the subconscient, which are being utilised for the perfection of the lower planes of life by the scientists of the modern age through the help of the mind with intellect and reason as its instruments. This is the system of western evolution (India, on the other hand, has relied on the revelation) of the superconscient (the Reign of the Supramental) existence acting through the Intuition, a higher faculty than pure Reason, through which the supreme Truth-world has descended into man as light, power, mastery, leading to Pure Delight. In the present age of darkness that world remains unexplored, and therefore we find the creation stamped with imperfections and characterised by all the limitations of the Sense-mind. Therefore, the dualities of existence have been taken as a matter of course, human life being regarded as a reed tossed about by the wind between two opposing extremes of pleasure and pain, the aim of life being mainly utilitarian, securing a maximum of pleasure, if possible to the greatest number, by the minimising of

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painful impressions. This, says Sri Aurobindo, can never be the ideal of human existence, and knowing perfectly well that an ideal of life must be, if anything, practical and capable of being realised in life in its most comprehensive aspect and not be limited to the Poet's dream or the visions of the idealist or the intellectual cognitations of the Philosopher, he has set about in all seriousness to find out the way for the fúlfilment of that divine ideal of humanity, and with the object of satisfying the intellect of a rationalistic age, he has tried to expound his systems of Divine Philosophy and synthesis of *Yoga*.

Intuition, then, is the instrument with which Sri Aurobindo starts to find and establish the new Truth. Glimpses of light sent down into the mind to illumine the reason, show him the way and following up that light after being securely based on a strong and pure foundation (achieved by ardent and intense *tapasya*) consisting of the triple principles of the physical, the vital and the mental, composing the lower planes ; and having thoroughly assured himself that it was not a will-o'-wisp that he was

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following, he left the old stereo-typed paths of *sadhana*, mainly, confined to the limited perfection of the lower planes, and took the daring jump, in his upward ascent, into the limitless deep of eternity to find out the Truth, to re-build the old spiritual worlds for the new creation and then to come down to the human plane to establish the new creation in life and thereby reproduce the Divine Man or superman in humanity. This is the basis for his synthetic philosophy and *sadhana*. How he realised this possibility is a matter of experience and can never be explained, nor can it form a fit subject for intellectual discussion. The will to recreate the Divine worlds is specially his, which none has been known to attempt before in any country or at any time in the history of humanity in its present cycle of evolution, but there can be no denying that he found his inner realisation amply corroborated by his spiritual research into the meaning of the *Veda*, which was to him the hand-book of Divine creation. None knows when and where in the evolution of humanity this Divine will, first conceived and becoming dynamic, through Sri Aurobindo, will

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be fructified but the Truth will remain that it was he and none other who had conceived and cherished it in his heart of hearts and had given it the first divine dynamic impulse to make the movement possible.

Although it is not possible for us to gain an insight into the inner working of his *sadhana* and Philosophy, still we may be permitted to add that his *sadhana* begins where that of others ends and he starts on his journey after supplying the missing link between the *Veda* and the Indian Philosophical systems so that others may intellectually dwell on that mighty experiment and clarify their *adhar* so that they may some day be fit for the *Sadhana* of Divine life. The pages of the *Arya* are full of this intellectual presentation, interspersed with luminous touches of self-realisation. In the first volume, he has gone into the whole range of the affirmations of Vedanta Philosophy and has explained them in the light of his own experiences the perusal of which may be taken as preparatory to entering into his philosophy of the Life Divine. He begins by noticing that there has been a sharp cleavage in the human evolution of thought by

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which the materialist has denied the existence of God and the Divine worlds, refusing to admit anything as true which is not percived by the sense-mind ; the ascetic, on the other hand, immersed in the delight of the Infinite, has refused to admit the life and the World and to enjoy the play. Sri Aurobindo says that this cleavage is unnatural and one-sided, due to an undue accentuation of one aspect of the Truth to the utter exclusion of the other though necessary in particular phases of evolution and he finds that the Real Truth lies in establishing a Harmony between these two contrary principles and in recognising that the Self and the matter are both *Brahman* and constitute one Reality in its different manifestations. This Harmony is to be no mere patch-work of compromises but should be based on the realisation of a Spiritual Unity, which is the basis for the Divine Life. That unity has got to be realised in its truer aspects of Divine Being, Divine Consciousness manifesting itself as Divine Force, and Divine Delight which constitute the essential nature of the self in its highest planes of existence. The play in the essence descends for manifestation

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into the three lower planes, passing through the intermediate causal plane of Vijnana, where the forces organise themselves and take shape for final manifestation in the lower planes. In one's upward ascent this plane has got to be reached before anything definite can be known about the nature of the mighty creation and the source of the Divine impulse working behind the movement. A man becomes fit for this Divine Life by practising an act of absolute spiritual surrender which is the beginning of his *Sadhana*. The *Sadhak* in his upward progress has to obey the light after using proper discrimination as to whether it is a ray that has indeed descended from the divine worlds to show him the way and not the creation of his own fancy and hallucination. Once assured the safest course for him is to obey and continue on the journey until ascending higher up his faith is transformed into a sure conviction, the suggestion becomes a mandate, which he willingly obeys and becomes an instrument for the divine work of re-creation. Moving on still further in the path as his nature gets more and more divinised and he becomes indentified in the Spirit

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with his true Self, the God in the movement, he becomes the Divine Agent and Master, the Supreme Lord of the Movement and whatever he wills, becomes automatically the Divine Will; his movement becomes the Divine Movement and his Creation becomes the Divine Worlds, he realising in himself along the whole scale of the gamut of the movement the Divine *Ananda* which is the basis of all existence. This is the ideal that Sri Aurobindo has set before himself as his goal and through him, the future goal of humanity and he has himself said in the pages of the *Arya* that if he can succeed it will smooth the way for future *Sadhaks* to realise this goal and make the task easier and the very act of succeeding will automatically reproduce the Divine creation in Humanity.

His *Sadhana* and Philosophy belong properly to the psychological age of the Veda and the Upanishads when man was so sure of his realisation that he used to dwell on the positive aspect of the truth, that which he had himself experienced. Then there was a fall and men were compelled to appeal to reason for confirmation of their experiences. This was the age of

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philosophy in the evolution of Indian thought-life. Sri Aurobindo has been compelled to explain his system, based on experimental knowledge, according to the system of reasoning prevalent in modern days and as the Vedanta philosophy approaches nearly to the highest achievements of the present age, he has begun by lucidly explaining the conclusions of the Vedanta Philosophy. The outline of his frame-work is based on the seven planes of consciousness in man symbolically represented by the seven worlds (or '*lokas*')—*Bhur* (Earth), the plane of physical consciousness, *Bhuvar* (air), the plane of vital consciousness, *Svar* (sky), the plane of mental consciousness, *Mahas* (the intermediate worlds), the plane of the causal Idea or Vijnana, *Jana*, the plane of creative Delight, *Tapas*, the plane of consciousess—Force, and *Satya*, the plane of Truth and Pure Being. These planes are conceived as situated in the inner being of man one above the other and the *Sadhana* consists in effecting an upward ascent through all the planes to the summit and the philosophy is concerned with evolving a connected system of thought, satisfying to the

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pure logical reason in man. In the Indian conception, the two run parallel and are most intimately connected and cannot be separated one from the other. All realisation is in its nature dual—a descent of the supreme Truth from the highest and a corresponding ascent upwards from the lowest. This goes on eternally in nature in her process of evolution but where it becomes first conscious in man, it becomes the *Sadhana* of Life. Therefore consciousness is the starting point in the evolution of Indian thought, for this is what differentiates man from the nature world, composed of animals, plants, minerals. Although according to the inherent nature of life expression, it must have existed in some form or other through all the planes of being. Therefore consciousness fully expressed constitutes the connotation of man. After very careful scrutiny, the Indian philosophers have found this consciousness to be seven-fold, the last three composing one unit in the essence, thus corresponding to the five primal elements of which the creation is composed, which are in their nature not material but attributive Earth, Water, Energy and Heat, Air and Ether.

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Man shares in common with the animal world his physical life. He lives, moves, has his being, takes food and drink to satisfy hunger and thirst and is guided by the instinct of self-preservation and is busy reproducing the species through the satisfaction of animal lust. This constitutes the physical being in man, his lowest stage in the Evolution. And the sum total of this life, expressed in the physical plane, considered in its essence, becomes the physical consciousness. No sooner is he discontented, with this merely crude ignorant and brutal form of life-evolution than he begins to look inwards and find behind the physical play a world of subtle forces, constituted of the inner cravings and desires, which he finds goads him on in his blind career in the physical plane. This constitutes the plane of vital consciousness in man, of which the physical plane is the field of manifestation. Man has to know and master this world thoroughly before he can cease to be a brute. The mere fact of avoiding the pleasures and enjoyment, in the physical plane is nothing which is not the divine intention in the movement, for if control and mastery is not

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established in the vital plane, a man is liable to become erratic in temperament and subject to abnormal moods resulting in serious pit-falls. If the Vital plane is properly organised and is established firmly on a stable balance then the pursuits in the physical plane become balanced and controlled and life manifests itself along normal currents without any kind of excess.

The control and mastery of this world implies, as a necessary corrollary, the pursuing of one's search to the next higher plane, the plane of mental consciousness, for on its discovery and intimate knowledge of its nature and working depends the final conquest of the vital world and its well-balanced re-arrangement. Humanity in its upward evolution to-day has only reached up to this mental plane of consciousness, which it has not yet been able to organise perfectly on a sweet harmonious balance, with the result that through the creation of a diversion in favour of the pursuits of the mental World, man has been able, in some degree, to control. The wild chaotic forces of the vital, replacing the lower activities by the higher and more ethereal pursuits of

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the mental world but unable completely to subjugate and transform the lower worlds due mainly to a want of harmony in the mental plane of existence, because its nature has not been fully understood depending, as it does, on yet higher world for its working with his limited vision, not open inwardly as yet to the higher Light, man has thought that the mental world is the highest world and he is busy exploring the potentialities of the mind and perfecting it by itself without any knowledge of the Beyond, so that what he creates suffers from being imperfect and being only a make-shift arrangement, compelled to lead a precarious existence, one phase of discovery being supplemented by another and that again becoming effeter in no time and all these wasted and ill-directed efforts being stamped by the egoism of man as the rapid progress of humanity in its upward flight to the Land of Truth. It is not denied that they have their importance in clarifying the mental world and widening the outlook, and there is reason to think that in course of time when it will be found that perfection cannot be attained along

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the line of evolution pursued, man will automatically be compelled to explore a new world where mightier possibilities can be realised with a better chance of success. The Indian philosophy and Indian *Yoga* offer positive clues as to the existence of these higher worlds in man, which they explored long ago and which the modern Seekers of Truth will be compelled to explore again in their search after Truth, as humanity can never be satisfied with a make-shift arrangement not fully convincing and must ultimately be led to find the supreme Truth, inspired by a sincere and earnest love for it, which has already become a valuable asset in man. All the best creations of man as a mental being in the domain of Metaphysics, Ethics, Philosophy, Religion, Science, Literarure, Art, Social institutions and State are stamped with the mark of failure and imperfection in the very inception and they will all have to be silently put by in the great lumber-room of Nature as mere waste and antiquarian curiosity when the time comes for recreation on Divine models after man has come to possess the supreme truth. In the meantime all this

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clamour and all this conflict, all this pose of egoistic superiority and all knowingness may be permitted to run their suicidal course unchecked.

These imperfections and this persistent failure of man to find a satisfying and permanent solution to the problems with which humanity has been beset to-day do prove conclusively that there is a world of consciousness beyond, where at least more perfect types exist, if we recognise but one fact that perfection is the ultimate goal of human evolution towards which humanity aspires and that it will not stop until that goal is reached. Indian philosophy asserts and Indian *Yoga* actually reveals the existence of higher world (of conciousness of course)— the world of Supramental existence or of Vijnana, the world of the causal Idea. It is here in this world that the eternal process of new creation is going on in the Idea, which is no mere idealism but a positive force expressed as a fact in creation to produce new types on a surer spiritual basis. This plane forms as it were, the background of this movement of creation and it is to the credit of Sri Aurobindo that he has re-discovered this new world,

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long lying deserted and unexplored, Indian *Yoga* in its later phases having chosen to walk along the by-paths of life and Indian philosophy having mainly preoccupied itself with intellectual discussions suited to the time and circumstances in which they were evolved. As has been said before, the key to this new world is the faculty of Intuition, through which it is revealed to the Seeker of Truth. If he has got the infinite patience to pursue the clue, he will be able in course of time to discover the worlds of the supramental existence for himself. The Veda conceives this world symbolically as the world of the *Ribhus* or the Divine Artisans of Immortality who are busy creating the perfect divine types in that Divine workshop to send them down on humanity as perfect creations, when the time comes for that Divine Lila to fulfil itself on Earth in the meantime the noblest creations of man in the mental plane being but imperfect reflection of the casual types in the supermental plane. Man as he soars aloft following the lead of Intuition aspires to become an artisan in that divine workshop so that he may be able to build the perfect types

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under the direction of the Divine Will. There he receives the training for that divine creation which afterward he is to utilise in the human plane for the creation of the Divine Man.

According to Sri Aurobindo the mere vision of this world is not enough which has so often misled many in India with its Psychic glamour, but one has actually to take practical training in that Divine Commune in the art of Divine creation. This is the most arduous part of the spiritual preparation and he who has passed this test gets an easy walk-over to the higher spiritual worlds, to get the finishing touch to perfection by indentifying himself with, and realising, the Divine in that supreme world of the truth, where the creator, the created and the creation are one in a triune Unity of Essence—Pure Being Divine, consciousness—Force, and Divine Delight. The Indian sages had the daring to question the finality of their experience of the Supermental Worlds as the highest world, and the door to the Temple of Truth was ultimately unlocked before them. When they had satisfied the supreme condition that Truth

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in their charge would not be exploited nor abused to fulfil the lower ends, however noble or sublime they might appear to be to the reason coloured by imagination ; so that they realised the Brahman both in its immutable aspect as well as in its Reality in the play and the movement and came to indentify himself in the spirit with the Divine Purusha, seated above the cosmic play as the Witness, the Guide, the Master and the Enjoyer. This is the final consummation. And yet beyond this region of Beings they further posited the Region of non-being as the unknowable Reality out of which Being emanated thus evolving the most perfect system of philosophy of world-existence, according to the Indian Sages. But says Sri Aurobindo, although this is philosophically convincing, still the Divine purpose in the movement is not fulfilled, if the soul does not come back after attaining perfection to shoulder his responsibility in the divine play and build up the world in a Divine mould for the creation of Divine humanity. When this has been accomplished then alone Man will have fulfilled his mission in cosmic play, and then only will

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his divine responsibility, the toils and hardship of the spiritual creation have ceased and he will stand absolved of his spiritual obligations at the bar of the future Divine Worlds.

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CONCLUDING REMARKS

In the midst of great difficulties in the path of carrying on any *Sadhana* in jail, beset as I have been with very serious limitations, affecting the core of my heart, I have been able to complete this self-imposed labour of love, as an offering at the great cosmic sacrifice for the deliverance of the cycle of creation from the clutches of the *Rakshasi* principle. I don't know how to love, I have forgotten how to adore, I have lost the will, that can lend grit and determination and help the *Sadhak* to persist onward in his journey in the path of self-realisation, I have forgotten the attitude of that supreme act of self-surrender which, as I find in dream, once was mine and yet if I have been able to complete this work, it must be entirely due to the saving grace of Him, who helps the greatest sinner to rise out of the pit in the depths of which he finds himself when he wakes up from his stuporous slumber. I know very little about the life which forms the subject-matter of this sketch and yet I have felt

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that I have known something of this life worth recording and led by this inner desire, more or less the working of *ahankara*, I have tried to record *my* impressions, in the hope that it will help the movement of Sri Aurobindo by doing some spade-work amongst a people so ignorant, so steeped in darkness, so helpless, needing succour so much in any form. May He, in His infinite mercy, purify and make this *ahankara* His own and accept this offering by bestowing on it the sacredness that is His and thereby making it fit for the sacrifice.

Through His grace, strength, determination, flow of thought and mental concentration all these channels were opened up and I was permitted to draw according to my own devotion. I could work on for one week continuously, keeping the mind full with the thought of his divine prototype, but then there was a serious lapse, the *Rakshasi* in me overpowered and choked up the divine fountain in me, so that I was once more forlorn and left absolutely helpless and weak to continue the work. Wild forces of disorder and anarchy reigned supreme in the inner world about me

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and not knowing how to be on the defensive or how to fight and conquer and scatter those forces, I lay shattered and fallen in the fight. But through His loving grace again, I once more recovered from the blow and not knowing how to fight, stealthily plodded on and have at last completed the work in secret. May He in His infinite mercy, remove the taint and the imperfection from my endeavour and make it His own.

Before concluding I feel impelled to say a few words about a dominant Indian charateristic in the domain of social psychology. Generally it is an inherent characteristic of the social man to extol and idolise his heroes and hold them up before the world as living types of perfect beings within the historical period, whose examples should emulate him in his struggle for a higher evolution. This homage of the social man is due to the fighter and protector, the victor, the martyr, the state-builder, the social reformer, the philanthropist, the philosopher, the artist, the scientist, the poet, the saint, the seer, simply because he feels that they by their sacred contribution

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have supplied the motor-power to the human organism to make it develop to a high order of evolution in which he finds it to-day. This gratitude is ingrained in the hearts of humanity and is almost a common asset.

But there is a radical difference in the Indian outlook with regard to this question of hero-worship which stamps it with the finest type of excellence and perfection. India does not worship the personality of her heroes but worships the Divinity in them. This is no phraseological jugglery but is a truism established on a firm foundation in fact. In the evolution of Western thought when the critical outlook in History gives place to appreciation in hero-worship it often develops into idolisation of the personality and a mental image is created of the man to be worshipped as one would worship an idol. Although Europe, with its proselytising christianity, is to-day up in arms against the so-called idolatry and superstition of the East, due to a want of intimate knowledge about the thought-evolution in the East, yet it goes without saying that while discrediting image-worship in Religion, she has

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not been able to shake off the intellectual slavery manifested in her Hero-worship. Those who have gone to attempt it have signally failed by establishing scepticism in the name of rationalism and in attempting to break down hero-worship has established a worse idol that of ingratitude to eat into the vitals of the nation. Not so in India and the East, where the very idols are worshipped as symbols of divinity and the long training that she has undergone through her rituals in realising the divine, has made it easy for her to worship the divine in man, regarding the man to be merely the sacred temple of God where the question of worship is concerned.

India is the land of the great Thought-Forces, created in the past by the great Seers of Indian thought and recorded in her sacred Scriptures, which have never ceased to influence the thought-currents of the Indian People. Apart from its historical importance, the divine Thought-Force of Sri Krishna sits as a great divine Shadow over the Indian mentality and the force of its influence in the moulding of Indian character and temperament can not

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be exaggerated. It is this manifestation of Sri Krishna the Divine Lord of the movement that the Indian sees in any great movement, almost indentifying, in the spirit, the central personality in the movement with Sri Krishna in the ideal world working his Divine Lila. For the Indian, be it remembered, this is no mere sentiment but constitutes the very marrow and bone of his life and all great movements of thought and culture have drawn their motor-power and inspiration from this deep-seated feeling in the race. And when-ever the personality, who sits at the helm of the movement and guides it, is conscious of this inner source of strength and learns to identify himself in the spirit with the Divine Lord by a supreme act of self-surrender, it is then that great things are accomplished, the old cycle is replaced by a new order and the true *Dharmasamrajya* is established on Earth. It is our faith and conviction that Sri Aurobindo was all along conscious, in the spirit, of this spiritual identity and therefore he could wield that enormous dynamic force which established such mighty results in the spiritual world. And when we call upon the Indians to

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study with us this life-sketch of this outstanding personality, we do not mean to establish hero-worship on western models, but we mean that they should find out the Sri Krishna in Sri Aurobindo and the national movement and learn to fall prostrate at his feet in an attitude of willing submission and spiritual self-surrender, so that they too, according to their inner fitness, may be taken in as humble workers in that great spiritual movement, not confined in its scope to any particular country, people, or age, but thoroughly universal in its scope and yet not ignoring the divine necessities of their respective self-fulfilment.

With these concluding words, I close this life-sketch, happy that even for once I have been permitted to hold in thought though for a moment the spiritual identity between Sri Aurobindo and the Divine *Purusha* in the movement and may this contact never fail to inspire me to develop the supreme devotion that will cast away all doubts and misgivings and take me in the soul to the feet of the Divine Master. Amen !

THE END

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APPENDIX A.

নমস্কার

অরবিন্দ, রবীন্দ্রের লহ নমস্কার।
হে বন্ধু, হে দেশবন্ধু, স্বদেশ-আত্মার
বাণী-মূর্ত্তি তুমি।
তোমা লাগি' নহে মান,
নহে ধন, নহে সুখ; কোনো ক্ষুদ্র দান
চাহ নাই কোন ক্ষুদ্র কৃপা; ভিক্ষা লাগি'
বাড়াওনি আতুর অঞ্জলি। আছ জাগি'
পরিপূর্ণতার তরে সর্ব্ব-বাধা-হীন,—
যার লাগি নর-দেব চির-রাত্রি-দিন
তপোমগ্ন; যার লাগি' কবি বজ্ররবে
গেয়েছেন মহাগীত, মহাবীর সবে
গিয়েছেন সঙ্কট যাত্রায়; যার কাছে
আরাম লজ্জিত-শির নত করিয়াছে;
মৃত্যু ভুলিয়াছে ভয়;—সেই বিধাতার
শ্রেষ্ঠ দান আপনার পূর্ণ অধিকার
চেয়েছো দেশের হ'য়ে অকুণ্ঠ আশায়,
সত্যের গৌরব দীপ্ত প্রদীপ্ত ভাষায়
অখণ্ড বিশ্বাসে। তোমার প্রার্থনা আজি
বিধাতা কি শুনেছেন? তাই উঠে বাজি,

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জয়-শঙ্খ তাঁর ? তোমার দক্ষিণ করে
তাই কি দিলেন আজি কঠোর আদরে
দুঃখের দারুণ দীপ, আলোক যাহার
জ্বলিয়াছে, বিদ্ধ করি' দেশের আঁধার
ধ্রুব-তারকার মতো ? জয় তব জয়
কে আজি ফেলিবে অশ্রু, কে করিবে ভয়,—
সত্যেরে করিবে খর্ব্ব কোন্ কাপুরুষ
নিজেরে করিতে রক্ষা ? কোন্ অমানুষ
তোমার বেদনা হ'তে না পাইবে বল ?
মোছ রে, দুর্ব্বল চক্ষু, মোছ অশ্রুজল।
দেবতার দীপ হস্তে যে আসিল ভবে
সেই রুদ্র দূতে, বলো, কোন্ রাজা কবে
পারে শাস্তি দিতে ? বন্ধন শৃঙ্খল তা'র
চরণ বন্দনা করি, করে নমস্কার—
কারাগার করে অভ্যর্থনা। রুষ্ট রাহু
বিধাতার সূর্য্য পানে বাড়াইয়া বাহু
আপনি বিলুপ্ত হয় মুহূর্ত্তেক পরে
ছায়ার মতন।

শাস্তি ? শাস্তি তা'রি তরে
যে পারে না শাস্তি ভয়ে হইতে বাহির—
লঙ্ঘিয়া নিজের গড়া মিথ্যার প্রাচীর

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কপট বেষ্টন ; যে নপুংস কোনো দিন
চাহিয়া ধর্ম্মের পানে নির্ভীক স্বাধীন
অন্যায়েরে বলেনি অন্যায় ; আপনার
মনুষ্যত্ব, বিধিদত্ত নিত্য অধিকার—
যে নির্লজ্জ ভয়ে লোভে করে অস্বীকার
সভা মাঝে ; দুর্গতির করে অহঙ্কার ;
দেশের দুর্দ্দশা ল'য়ে যার ব্যবসায়,
অন্ন যার অকল্যাণ মাতৃ-রক্ত প্রায়
সেই ভীরু নতশির, চির শাস্তি তা'রে
রাজকারা বাহিরেতে নিত্য কারাগারে।

বন্ধন পীড়ন দুঃখ অসম্মান মাঝে
হেরিয়া তোমার মূর্ত্তি, কর্ণে মোর বাজে
আত্মার বন্ধন-হীন আনন্দের গান,
মহাতীর্থ যাত্রীর সঙ্গীত, চির-প্রাণ
আশার উল্লাস, গম্ভীর নির্ভয় বাণী
উদাত্ত মৃত্যুর। ভারতের বীণা-পাণি
হে কবি, তোমার মুখে রাখি' দৃষ্টি তাঁর
তারে তারে দিয়াছেন নিপুণ ঝঙ্কার,—
নাহি তাহে দুঃখ তান, নাহি ক্ষুদ্র লাজ,
নাহি দৈন্য, নাহি ত্রাস। তাই শুনি আজ
কোথা হ'তে ঝঞ্ঝাসাথে সিন্ধুর গর্জ্জন,

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অন্ধবেগে নির্ঝরের উন্মত্ত নর্ত্তন
পাষাণ পিঞ্জর টুটি ;—বজ্র গর্জ্জরব
ভেরি মন্দ্রে মেঘ পুঞ্জ জাগায় বৈভব
এ উদাত্ত সঙ্গীতের তরঙ্গ মাঝার
অরবিন্দ, রবীন্দ্রের লহ নমস্কার।
তা'র পরে তাঁরে নমি যিনি ক্রীড়াচ্ছলে
গড়েন নূতন সৃষ্টি প্রলয় অনলে,
মৃত্যু হতে দেন প্রাণ, বিপদের বুকে
সম্পদেরে করেন লালন, হাসিমুখে
ভক্তেরে পাঠায়ে দেন কণ্টক কান্তারে—
রিক্ত-হস্তে শত্রু মাঝে রাত্রি অন্ধকারে
যিনি নানা কণ্ঠে কন্ নানা ইতিহাসে,
সকল মহৎ কর্ম্মে পরম প্রয়াসে,
সকল চরম লাভে, "দুঃখ কিছু নয়
ক্ষত মিথ্যা, ক্ষতি মিথ্যা, মিথ্যা সর্ব্ব ভয়,
কোথা মিথ্যা রাজা কোথা রাজদণ্ড তা'র,
কোথা মৃত্যু অন্যায়ের কোথা অত্যাচার।
ওরে ভীরু, ওরে মূঢ়, তোলো তোলো শির,
আমি আছি, তুমি আছ, সত্য আছে স্থির।"

৭ই ভাদ্র ১৩১৪

রবীন্দ্রনাথ

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Prof. JYOTISH CH. GHOSE

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APPENDIX B.

DESHABANDHU DAS'S ADDRESS IN THE ALIPORE CONSPIRACY CASE.

May it please your honour, and gentlemen assessors, —it is a matter of congratulation for us all, that at last this trial has come to a close. It is especially a matter of congratulation for the prisoners at the bar because they have been in Jail for the best part of a year and the time has now come, gentlemen, for you to consider the evidence which has been placed before you to find out whether the charges brought against them by the prosecution are true or not. I shall have to deal with the evidence in this case at some length but before I do that I must draw your attention to certain features of this case which are very unusual. I believe Mr. Birley said in his evidence that he took special, or rather unusual interest in this case because it was an unusual case and you will find throughout the evidence in this case that it has been conducted on very unusual lines. I am not referring to what has taken place here so much as to what took place before the committing Magistrate, before the case came here. The seeds were sown there, you will find that Mr. Birley made up his mind to try this case on the 3rd May, the accused persons being arrested on suspicion. The evidence

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is that the police connected some of the accused at any rate with bombs and with conspiracy; whether that evidence is true or false is another matter. It is their version that on the 2nd May these accused persons were arrested on suspicion and taken to the thana and kept in the lock-up. They were not produced before the Magistrate at all unless of course they say the Commissioner of Police is a Magistrate. We find on the 3rd May Mr. Birley made up his mind to try the case. They were produced before him on the 4th May. We find that Mr. Birley went to the house of a Police officer—a very high official no doubt—and there he read some of the confessions alleged to have been made by the accused persons to the Police. I say this is an unusual feature, a feature we have not come across in any case in any Court before now. Having done that what does he do? On the 4th May some of the accused persons were produced before him. He forthwith proceeded to examine them. The case for the prosecution is that he recorded the confessions of these accused under a particular section of the Code. With regard to that I shall deal later and you will find from those questions put by Mr. Birley that his object of enquiring was as to what other persons were implicated in certain things. That is done on the 4th May. On the 3rd May he makes up his mind to try this case, on the 4th May the accused is brought before him and before a scrap of evidence is placed before him

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—he proceeded to take the statement of the accused personally putting questions and recording their answers. After that you will find that he dealt with the applications for bail; a great many were put in—almost all the accused one by one made an application. They were all rejected. Later on May 18th evidence began before Mr. Birley with the examination of Mr. Frizoni. On that day you find objections were taken to his jurisdiction. You find the next day Mr. Birley in the order-sheet is referring to his order of the 3rd May to show how he came to take up the case himself. There is another unusual thing which I have to mention.

After Frizoni was examined in part on the 18th May, on the 19th he made an order, I shall read it. There is no record of that evidence here at all. But Mr. Birley thought that some objections may be put forward before him to the effect that he had taken cognizance of the case without the proper sanction of the Court; so he proceeds to re-examination to make the proceeding regular according to his opinion. Is that the manner in which a Magistrate is to record evidence? My submission is that the object of that entry here in the evidence of Frizoni is to get over what he thought he could not get over, namely, the legal objection to his jurisdiction.

It is perfectly clear that before the 18th May there was no sanction put up before him on any

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authority and it is perfectly clear that even when he got sanction he did not examine the complainant as he was bound to do under the law. I submit all these proceedings are of a very unusual character. These proceedings are not warranted by anything in the Code of Criminal Procedure or under any law. I can quite understand my friend's contempt for the Code, but I venture to submit that the Code applied even to a state trial and more so in a trial where persons are accused of the most serious offences known to the law. I shall show you, when I survey the evidence and put it before you that ninety per cent. of that is inadmissible here and ninety per cent. of it throws no light upon the charges which these persons are brought here to meet. Not only is public time and money wasted but that all that mass of evidence tends, and must necessarily tend to prejudice the accused.

In a case like this, the first thing to do is to prove that a conspiracy did exist and the next thing is to connect the particular persons with the conspiracy. What has been the method followed by my friend? Whether he discussed oral evidence or documentary evidence he started with the assumption that these persons are guilty. He assumed their guilt and then tried to connect them with the evidence. He reads a letter and finds a reference to A. G. What is his arugument? Does he refer to any proof to show that A. G. stands for Aurobindo Ghosh? No.

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His argument is "I tell you that is Aurobindo Ghosh". In order to try the accused persons you must start with the assumption that they are guilty and after to look into the evidence connecting them.

Take the Chattra Bhander. Aurobindo Ghosh is a conspirator because he is connected with the Chattra Bhandar. I submit that is entirely a wrong procedure to adopt—a procedure which has never been adopted before in any Court of Justice. He ought to have told you that you must proceed on the assumption that these persons are innocent of all the charges brought against them and if by pursuing the evidence you come to the conclusion that the evidence is unmistakable proof of their guilt, then and then only can you convict them.

There is another point—that is with regard to Aurobindo's domestic letters. Read these letters and you will find that they throw no light on the charges against these accused. The sanctity of his private correspondence has been wantonly and improperly violated. Was it for the purpose of proving to you that these men are guilty? I submit not. There is nothing in those letters from beginning to end which throws a light on the charges for which these men are being tried. There again my friend's argument was "don't read the letters as they stand but read between the lines". That is to say although the letters don't support the conspiracy and don't suggest any offence,

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yet you must not be deceived by them. Don't you know Aurobindo is guilty? Don't you know he is connected with bombs? Don't you know he has waged war against the king? Take that for granted and you find him guilty. His movement in Baroda is stated to be in connection with bombs. His articles in the *Bande Mataram* are referred to. There is no evidence at all reliable which is put forward to show that he is responsible for every article in the *Bande Mataram*. The articles breathe the ideal of freedom. My friend began his speech by saying that these were ideals which no Englishman would quarrel with. Those articles I repeat, if they show anything show that Aurobindo Ghosh was preaching from beginning to end that ideal of freedom which, we were told over and over again, no Englishman would quarrel with. Does not that argument involve the same fallacy to which I referred, namely that you must assume that Aurobindo Ghosh was in the conspiracy and after starting with that to read the articles? Here although he preaches those ideals, you must read into those articles bombs and conspiracy to warfare. Throughout the whole course of his arguments the fallacy was repeated over and over again.

I have already told you that the correspondence of Aurobindo has been placed before you; in fact, gentlemen, his whole life has been laid bare before you. My friend's contention is that on that evidence which deals with his inner life you will see signs of conspiracy

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and waging war. I shall confidently take my stand upon that very correspondence and material, I shall show you that during the whole life of Aurobindo, beginning with his first work up to the day of his arrest he was actuated by a noble ideal. I shall take you through the correspondence dealt with while he was at Baroda, his utterances whether in the press or on the platform, and I shall show you that there is not one single suggestion of any conspiracy to wage war against the Government. He has throughout been actuated by a nobler ideal. You will find from the middle of 1904, 1905, 1906, and almost up to a few days before his arrest that he was actuated by that noble ideal. It will not be out of place here before I come to deal with the particular point in the case to give you a short sketch of those ideas. My friend throughout the whole course of his address did not hesitate to scoff at it, but that is a matter of no concern to me, so far as the nation was concerned he preached that lofty ideal of freedom; so far as the individual was concerned his ideal always was to go there himself and look for the God-head within. It is familiar ideal of our country. It is difficult for those not familiar with it to understand it but to you gentlemen, it is familiar.

The doctrine of Vedantism is that man is not dissociated from God; that is to say if you want to realise yourself you must look for the God within you.

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It is within your heart and within your soul, that you will find that God dwells and as no man can attain to his own salvation without reaching that God that is within you; so also in the case of nations without any national question arising—no nation can attain this unless it realises the highest and noblest and the best of that nation. As in the case of individuals you can not reach your God with extraneous aid, but you must make an effort—that supreme effort—yourself before you can realise the God within you; so also with a nation. It is by itself that a nation must grow; a nation must attain its salvation by its unaided effort. No foreigner can give you that salvation. It is within your own hands to revive that spirit of nationality. That is the doctrine of nationality which Aurobindo has preached throughout and that was to be done not by methods which are against the traditions of the country. I ask your particular attention to that. It was not Aurobindo's philosophy that salvation was to be attained by methods inconsistent with the whole history and traditions of the writer and therefore when you find Aurobindo leaving Baroda and coming to Calcutta you find that the doctrines he preaches are not doctrines of violence but doctrine of passive resistance. It is not bombs but sufferings. He deprecates secret societies and violence and enjoins them to suffer. If there is a law which is unjust and offensive against the development of the

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nation, break that law by all means and take the consequences. He never asked you to apply force in the single utterance of his either in the press or on the platform. If the Government thought fit to bring in a law which hinders you from attaining that salvation, Aurobindo's advice is to break that law if necessary in the sense of not obeying it. You owe it to your conscience; you owe it to your God. If the law says you must go to jail, go to jail. That was the cardinal feature of the doctrine of passive resistance which Aurobindo preached. Is not the doctrine of passive resistance preached throughout the world on the same footing? It is peculiar to this country—this movement which has met with such abusive language from Mr. Norton? Have not the people of England done it over and over again? I say that this is the same doctrine that Aurobindo was preaching almost upto the very day when those handcuffs were put on his hand He was oppressed with a feeling of disappointment, because his country was losing everything having lost their faith. Therefore you find whenever he preached freedom he brought out that feature clearly. He says, believe in yourself; no one can attain salvation who does not believe in himself. Similarly, he says in the case of the nation. If the nation does not feel that it has got something within it to be free to attain that salvation then there is no hope for that nation. Accordingly we find Aurobindo preaching "you are not cowards,

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you are not a set of incapable men, because you have divinity. Have faith in you, and in that faith go on towards that goal, and become a self-developed nation".

I now deal with the evidence referred to by my learned friend to show the inner work of Aurobindo from 1902 down to the day of his arrest. You will find, gentlemen, that upto 1902 or 1903 there was no connection between Barin and Aurobindo.

You will find it is proved by the evidence in this case that Aurobindo went away to England. After his return he was posted at Baroda. Barin at that time was being educated at Deoghar. From there he went to Dacca to study for F.A. After that he went to Patna and thence he went to Baroda. We find him in Baroda in 1902 and 1903. My learned friend's argument is that it was during his stay in Baroda in 1902 and 1903 that the seeds of revolution were sown in the hearts of Barindra by Aurobindo. Barin says in his statement that he came away from Baroda sometime in 1903 and began to tour round the different parts of the country and preached the cause of independence. My learned friend thinks this to be an ideal with which nobody will quarrel and then with regard to this ideal he says that the seeds of this content was sown at Baroda.

First of all you will find, gentlemen, from the evidence of Sukumar Mitter and Padoo Tewari

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that there was no connection between Barin and Aurobindo before their meeting at Baroda in 1902 and 1903. Therefore as long as Barin was at Deoghar you find from the evidence of Sukumar and Padoo that the two brothers did not meet. Barin passed his Entrance Examination from Deoghar, he read F. A. at Dacca and then went to Bankipore and then eventually went to Baroda. The two brothers first met at Baroda. After a time Barin left Baroda and engaged himself in preaching the cause of independence of the country. From that, my learned friend argued that the poison must have been infused into Barin by Aurobindo. The best way to test that would be from what Aurobindo himself says at that time when they were together at Baroda in 1902 and 1903. There are only three exhibits 292-1, 292-3 and 292-5. I am not aware of any other letters of that period. Exhibits 292-1 is a letter dated the 2nd of July 1902. * * * How do you find sedition or waging of war against the Government in this letter ?

With regard to the reference to Jyotindra I shall deal later on. Aurobindo wanted the horoscope of his wife to show to Jyotindra who was an astrologer in the Baroda service. I want to deal later on with Jyotindra and see if he was the accused who has since been discharged. It was in 1902. That does not help the case for the prosecution at all. Amongst these letters I have just mentioned there is another letter dated the 20th of August 1902. This letter refers to

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his promotion and so on. There is nothing important in that letter except that soon before that time Aurobindo considers himself a strict member of the Hindoo Society. Those are all the letters which we get and which we preserved to give us an idea as to what the trend of his mind was in 1902. After that, as I have told you, Barin came away from Baroda and was engaged in preaching the cause of independence. He goes back sometime in 1904 or 1905. It is difficult to find out exactly when. It is at that time that Aurobindo complains about Barindra. You will find that from Exhibit 286-4.

If you see coupled Exhibit 286-4 with the evidence of Sukumar you will find that Aurobindo complained that Barindra would not take service. It is clear that Barin at that time went back. Aurobindo asked him to accept service but Barindra refused to work. This letter was written on 22nd October, 1905. This is not in order of time. This is the last letter of that period, before Barin goes to Baroda. Aurobindo complains, "Barin is never quiet, he will not accept any service". Therefore we see, gentlemen, that Barin goes back. It must have been that Barin's people took him to task for doing nothing and asked him to take some post to earn his livelihood. Aurobindo complains "he is not quiet, he wants to go out for the service of the country". That also we find in Sukumar's evidence. That shows clearly the relation between Aurobindo and Barindra.

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Then, gentlemen, you have got to consider Aurobindo's own views during that period. The career which Aurobindo sketched out in that letter is that to which he stuck up to the day of his arrest. I refer you to the letter of Aurobindo to his wife, dated 13th August, 1905. At that time Barin was living at Baroda. I have shown from the letter of 20th October, 1905, that Aurobindo was complaining about Barin. So Barin was at that time at Baroda. The seeds of revolution were again sown. It is better to find out what Aurobindo's own views were about the time. These letters are Exhibits 286-1 and 286-2. I would prefer to read the Bengali letter. You must remember, gentlemen, that at that time Aurobindo did not acquire a sufficient knowledge in Bengali. It is written after Sanskrit. You remember, gentlemen, that *Andha Rajar Mahishi*. This allusion refers to queen Gandhari who used to blindfold her eyes as her husband Dhritarastra was blind. Gentlemen, you see that Aurobindo describes himself as Pagal (a mad man) and tells his wife to settle as to what path she would follow. He makes the reference to Gandhari and expresses his hope that inasmuch as there is Hindoo blood in her veins she will follow the course which he has taken up. The life he sketched out he followed literally. The man has spent all his income for the good of the country, for charity keeping only that which is necessary for his bare subsistence. The first great ideal which he sets out in this letter

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is that he must regard himself as trustee of all money that belongs to him. It is his duty to spend as little as possible for himself for the purpose that he may continue to live and give the rest to God. How? By doing God's work, namely by feeding those who are hungry and by assisting those who are in need. It is then and then only that you can give back what you owe to God. If a man does not do it he is then a thief. It is not for his own selfish end. He is determined to lead that life. He will keep for himself only what is absolutely necessary for bare subsistence and the rest he will give back to God. The only way you can do that is by way of charity, by feeding the hungry and by rendering assistance to those who are in need of it.

The second great ideal to which he refers is he has got the conviction in his mind, that it is possible to see God, not to see God in the objective sense but according to Hindoo religion to see God in his own mind. One can discover the God-head that is within him. It is easy to scoff at this. But here is a man giving expression to his earnest longing to realise the God-head himself. This is his second great ideal. There is another point and that is this. There is also in this letter a covered reference to *Guru* (Spiritual guide).

Because you know gentlemen that when a Hindoo brings himself under a spiritual guide he never

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discloses the manner of his *Guru* nor the fact that he has done it. That is part of the religion. Unless you get the permission of the *Guru* you can not give it out even to your wife "Jaibar Niyam dekhayche", that is somebody has pointed out the rules of conduct which will help him to enter that path following which he can realise the God That is within him. Then he began to practise. That is to say he began to shape his life according to those rules.

Then he says "after practising them for one month, and realising the signs which the Hindoo religion has said to be the signs of that stage", "everybody is entitled to that path. Unless you desire to enter that line you can not get it. But it is within the power of every individual to attain that". In this letter he asks his wife to write to him whether she desires to enter this line or not, so that he may further correspond with her on that point. I ask you to remember this because you will find it is fully explained in his subsequent letters to which my learned friend also has referred.

Then he comes to his third ideal. Here he lays down the basis of his patriotism. There again the ideal is drawn from Vedantism. You know the doctrine according to the Vedantism is that the whole world is a manifestation of God. Unless you realise that the whole is a manifestation of Divinity, as long as you do not realise within yourself that the world

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you see around you, the country in which you live are manifestations of Divinity then all these are unreal as long as you do not realise the association, the connection between them and the Absolute. But when you realise they are not seperated from but are parts and manifestation of Divinity that very moment they cease to be unreal and become real. "What do you think of your country? It is not merely forest, river, etc". To Aurobindo it is the manifestation of Motherhood. That is another aspect of Divinity according to Hindoo religion. His basis of patriotism is that you must show regard to your country that you can discover and realise the Motherhood of the country. You must so love your country that you can realise within yourself that it is another aspect of God. A man who believes in Vedanta can see clearly and finds no difficulty at all. That is the basis of his patriotism. You must realise Divinity in the country in which you live. Aurobindo feels that nationalism has no place unless it leads to universal humanity. Unless nations develop in that way, the ideal of humanity can never be reached. I shall point out from article after article in the *Bande-Mataram* that as the individual must live in the light of the society so the nation must live in the light of humanity without which the whole philosophy is meaningless absolutely. He looks upon the country as the Mother. As I have explained that is another manifestation of God.

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Then he says that his ideal is independence and the last line of this paragraph makes it clear. Some day or other, it may not be in his life-time that this ideal will be accomplished. "When the mother is oppressed what will her sons do, etc."? A very curious argument has been based upon that. He says how can you do that. You have got no guns, no swords. "It is my ideal," he says "that the country should realise freedom some day or other". He explains it by his answer. How can you do it? "I am not referring to *Kshatratej* but I am referring to *Brahmatej*". My learned friend's argrument is that so far as Aurobindo himself is concerned he will do the advising but others will be left to bombs. Where do you find this in these letters? My learned friend's argument is on the whole of this sort that you must assume that Aurobindo is guilty. Then you are to read the letters between the lines. According to my friend's contention, so far as Aurobindo is concerned, he will apply the *Brahmatej*, and make others to use the *Kshatratej*. If you read these letters you must come to the conclusion that he deprecates other forces. The only force upon which he relies and to which he appeals is the intellectual force. It is upon this force, he says, the future welfare of the country rests. He is going to rely upon guns and swords. With all respect I submit that the suggestion of my learned friend is absurd. Anyone who reads the letters must come to

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the conclusion that the means which Aurobindo suggests is not physical force but the force of character, the force of intellect, upon those forces the future of the country will be based. He says "don't you think that physical force is the only force in the world, there is a higher force and that is intellectual force, the force of character. Rely upon that force. That is the means which should be employed for the deliverance of the country". It is not possible to put the construction upon the letter as my learned friend has done.

Referring to that part of the letter which says "If a demon sits on the breast of the mother what would the sons do". Counsel said—what is the meaning of that? It is only an analogy. He says that he regards his country, not as merely a collection of fields, hills, rivers, and so forth but he regards her as his Mother; then he says that he is only referring to the fact that the country is under subjection. He has used only a metaphor to shew that his countrymen are not to sit idle—but to act so as to realise his ideal. The letter was not intended for publication, it was not an open letter to his countrymen; it was to his wife. (* * *). Does not it mean that regarding the facts that their country is in a wretched condition, it is far away from freedom, it is in bondage? So it is the duty of every man in India to stir himself to realise the ideal of freedom. His basis of patriotism is that

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he regards his country as Mother. It is to him not a physical nonentity but is a concrete manifestation of Divinity. His central idea is that the country is a concrete manifestation of Divinity.

The regeneration of the country has to be brought about by force of character and intellect and not by physical force. Then the next paragraph makes it clear.

You understand, gentlemen, what he means by saying "wife is the strength of husband". That attribute in Aurobindo by which he realises the Divinity is *Sakti* and he brings that into relationship between a husband and wife and say wife is the Sakti. It is through her that he realises the higher relation of man and wife.

Referring to the sentence "will you utter the *mantra* of worshipping the *Saheb* life, Usha ?" Counsel said he thereby means to say "will you worship Western ideals ?" He is disparaging those who follow Western ideals.

"Ei chila sei goponia kotha." He explains the secret in the letter and asks for the co-operation of his wife. He asks his wife to worship God, then she will be able to realise these things. There is nothing into the letter except that, it refers to his wife's vices which he says, are vices of the present time. Then he says that every high ideal is now-a-days laughed at.

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I refer your Honour to the letter, dated the 30th August, 1905. I submit that the letter shows no disposition on the part of Aurobindo to use physical force of any description at all. On the contrary what the writer does rely upon is what he calls ব্রহ্মতেজ, (*Brahmatej*). You will find later on that all throughout his activities he merely advocates the application of the force to which the phrase *Brahmatej* refers. Here is a man who regards it as a part of his ideal of religion to bring about the salvation of his country and that by applying *Brahmatej*; it is for you to consider what the man had in contemplation. It is a truth of political philosophy. You remember in this connection that no government, however, absolute or representative, it may be, can exist except without the consent of the people. It is a maxim which is well recognised by political philosopher from Hobbes to Spencer downwards. When a government exists, it shows conclusively that it exists with the consent of the people. He preaches that the salvation of the country must be attained by people who possess *Brahmatej*. First of all, I submit that he preaches the ideal of freedom because he thinks that until a transformation in the thought of the people is brought about he cannot accomplish his ideal. He says and says candidly that it cannot be brought about in life-time of an individual. But before that point is reached he holds that the people must be educated at any rate. And it is when the

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consent of the people is lost that the Government ceases to exist. What are the means he adopts when he comes to Calcutta? He takes up the cause of National Education. All throughout his activities and until the day of his arrest he was always in favour of National Education. He sacrificed his worldly prospects in order that he might improve the national education of his country. He joins the National Council of Education and fills an important post there. He engages himself in the *Swadeshi* and Boycott movements. In this connection his ideal is that when the people have learnt to love the country they must encourage the industries of their country. Aurobindo's view with regard to *Swadeshi* is that it is not purely industrial. I do not desire to justify Aurobindo's connection with *Swadeshi* and boycott movement purely on industrial lines. This way of thinking is inconsistent. What I do say is that he has got one all-absorbing ideal for the regeneration of his country, and the basis of that ideal is religion. His advocacy of the Swadeshi, boycott and national education is not only for the industrial development of the country, not only the development of the education of his country but he thinks that these are means which are conducive to the awakening of the national spirit of this country. This is the line of activity. Before I deai with the various documentary evidence upon this point, you will allow me to place before you two letters which

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will throw some light. One letter is dated 30th August, 1905 which will show the thing in its two aspects, and the other letter is dated the 17th February, 1908. I shall also refer to another letter to which my learned friend has not referred. It is of the 20th February, 1908. The first letter is marked as 292-4 and the second 292-10. The first letter is set out in the first volume of Exhibits page 401. With your permission I will deal with the letter in Bengali.

Counsel next read the letter in original Bengali and then the English translation. The letter stated "I have not written to you for a long time. I was to return on the 8th but I could not do so. Where-ever Providence took me to I went. I was not engaged in my work but His".

Commenting on this Counsel said, this letter shows where he did go. Various witnesses also spoke about it in the course of the trial. The contents of the speeches he delivered will show in what way his activities were directed. I submit that whatever activities he was engaged in were based on religion.

My learned friend seemed to have thought that Aurobindo in his statement dissociated himself from political work. But in his statement he says, "in all my activities, political, religious, or otherwise, I followed the principles which are enunciating himself from it, he admits that he was engaged in a political work. My learned friend has a marvellous faculty of

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misunderstanding Aurobindo. There is an interesting point in my learned friend's address. With reference to the transformation of Aurobindo's thought as referred to in the letter my learned friend was going to suggest something, but all on a sudden he turned away in another direction and suggested that on account of the "sweets' letter" there was a transformation in his thought. My learned friend branched it off as it were and said his case was that Aurobindo was engaged throughout in the conspiracy. That point he gave up, namely, the suggestion that "sweets' letter" had anything to do with this wonderful transformation in Aurobindo's activities.

Counsel here read the letter further on, which says "the condition of mind is different now and I am no longer subject to my own will. I shall have to do whatever He bids me". Your honour will see how Aurobindo's conviction were getting deeper and deeper every day. You are familiar with the Hindu thought on the point. In this connection I may point out to your honour the utterances of Ramkrishna Paramhansa and other saints. The man considering himself as the actor is inconsistent with the principles of Hindu religion, the very essence of which is তুমি যন্ত্রী আমি যন্ত্র। *i.e.*, you are the player of the instrument and I am instrument itself. This thought is referred to in the letter of the 30th August in which Aurobindo says to his wife "you may think that I am doing all this of my own

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accord but these are not my own actions. I am merely an instrument of the Divinity within".

Continuing Counsel said: You are also aware of the line in the "Gita"— ত্বয়া হৃষিকেশ হৃদি স্থিতেন যথা নিযুক্তোঽস্মি তথা করোমি। *i.e.*, Thou dwellest inside I do whatever Thou dost engage me in.

Mr. Das read the line in the letters which showed that God had shown a specimen of his boundless mercy. Does this—asked Counsel—suggest bombs? It marks the beginning of his religious convictions. Aurobindo says further on the letter that God will show His mercy to her also. He will show her also the way. Does it suggest that his wife is to join the conspiracy and engage in the preparation of bombs to kill the English? It is for the wife to help the husband in the exercise of the religious rites. Aurobindo used the word সহধর্ম্মিণী in the letter referred to above. He calls his wife সহধর্ম্মিণী according to Hindu ideal. I suggest that this transformation marks the beginning of Aurobindo's religious conviction. The wife is to assist the husband in the exercise of his religious rites. Aurobindo writes to his wife "Pray to God half-an-hour every day and He will give you strength. You will be in a position to assist me in my religious practices".

Counsel read the portion of the letter which says বলা নিষিদ্ধ *i.e.*, what he writes is not allowed to be divulged. Counsel commenting on this said, if a

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man takes the মন্ত্র he is not to divulge it to any one, even to his wife unless he gets permission from his *Guru*. Aurobindo says that the matter is গোপনীয় *i.e.*, secret. I submit that even if the language of this letter is strained no other construction could be put upon this. He says তোমাকে ছাড়া কাহাকেও বলি নাই, বলা নিষিদ্ধ, *i.e.*, I have not said it to anybody else except you and I am not allowed to divulge it". Why? If it is a matter of conspiracy the conspirators know it. Aurobindo says বলা নিষিদ্ধ। The Government translation of this is "I have been specially forbidden to disclose it". I submit that this is not a proper translation. The correct translation would be "it is not allowable". The letter of the 30th August is on a purely religious topic; because he for a business matter refers his wife to Sorojini. After his return from the Congress he must have taken the *mantra* and he was auxious to take his wife along with him.

Barin went to Baroda in the year 1905. My learned friend suggests that it was at this time that the seeds of anarchism were sown. The letter Ex. 286-3 was written before Aurobindo came to Calcutta. First of all it shows that at that time he was not interesting himself in Calcutta politics. He did not know anything about Bengal politics at that time excepting *Swadeshi* movement which was all over India at that time. The letter states futher on "I have had to spend a lot of money on account of the *Swadeshi* movement.

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I have another movement in view which requires unlimited money".

But what is this movement? My learned friend suggests, that is the movement that you have got here. But was it started at that time? Was it started as far back as 1905? Aurobindo writes "I have had to spend a lot of money on account of the *Swadeshi* movement. I wish to carry out another movement which requires unlimited money". I submit, observed Counsel, this movement is not the movement of the bomb. Aurobindo's idea was to start an extensive movement of *Vedantism*. He desired to spread it not only all over India but all over the world. He is a Vedantist and he bases whole of his activities on *Vedantism*. He was thinking of starting the movement on the basis of his truest principles. You must not foget that it is not a matter of conjecture that *Vedantism* may be carried outside India. It has already been carried into America and also into England though not to the same extent into the latter. The movement of bombs according to my learned friend was inaugurated in Calcutta sometime after the time mentioned in the letter. Whenever my learned friend comes accross the word "movement" he at once comes to the conclusion that it must be a movement of bombs. I need not trouble your honour with anything further about this letter.

The next question is when Aurobindo came to Calcutta. He came sometime in May, 1906, and then he

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went to Baroda back again. It is very important to fix the date. Here is a letter from Aurobindo to his father-in-law. It is marked 292-6 and dated 8th June. You will find the letter on page 5, Book I. It is written from Calcutta. The letter states "If you are anxious to send Mrinalini down to Calcutta I have no objection. Barin has fallen ill. I suggest that he may go to Shillong for a change. If he goes I am sure, you will take care of him. Barin is somewhat erratic. He is specially fond of knocking about in a spasmodic fashion when he should stay at home and nurse his health. I have learnt not to interfere with him in this respect. If I interfere and try to check him, he is likely to go off at a tangent and become worse".

Commenting on this Counsel observed, my learned friend has made use of this letter and observed that Aurobindo is a very affectionate brother.

On the 7th July, observed Counsel, Aurobindo was at Baroda. Between the 6th July and August, there is no letter to throw any light. If you turn to page 254 of the Book I, you will find at the bottom of the page, that Aurobindo is described as a service-holder. This document is dated the 1st of August, 1906. So far as documentary evidence is concerned, you find that Aurobindo was in Calcutta on that date.

It is clear—observed Mr. Das—that Aurobindo had come to Calcutta, shortly before the st of August. Witness Sukumar Mitter also spoke about

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this, but his evidence is rather hazy with regard to dates. It happens that he never went to Baroda after that. He must have sent his resignation. The National College was well established in the meantime and my learned friend calls the period between August 1906 and October of the same year the "period of great activities". Aurobindo became the Principal of the National College within this period. Within this period of time the "Bande Mataram" was started. He was certainly one of the promoters of the "Bande Mataram" company and the venture, the "Chattra Bhandar" was called into being. These are the three lines of his activities. I will prove here that so far as the "Chattra Bhandar" is concerned, he had no connection with it except that he signed this name as a witness. This was a mere formal matter. He was connected with both the institutions, the National Council of Education and the "Bande Mataram" if I am allowed to call the latter an institution. I do not admit for a moment that he was Editor of the "Bande Mataram". But I do not for a moment deny that he was connected with it and certainly he was connected with it as a contributor.

My learned friend speaking about the "Chattra Bhandar" observed that it is a limb of the conspiracy. Because, Aurobindo was connected with it, or Aurobindo is a conspirator, so the "Chattra Bhandar" is a limb of conspiracy. The question is "Is Aurobindo a conspirator"? The charge that he is a conspirator

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is laid at his door, because of his alleged connection with the "Chattra Bhandar". First of all, if you look at the Memorandum of Association of the "Chattra Bhandar", you find that Aurobindo signs his name as witness.

My learned friend says that the organisation is a limited liability company, its Articles of Association and so forth are mere devices. He observes that they do not represent the real state of affairs. The argument is that the "Chattra Bhandar" became a limited liability company with a view to conceal its real object.

Mr. Norton : I never said that.

Mr. Das : Perhaps it is owing to my weak intellect that I could not understand what my learned friend said. He said as a matter of fact that it is a cloak to conceal the design. Let us look at the documents itself, I am referring to Clause III of it. It says that the Company is started to carry on business as merchants, traders, importers, exporters, and general business merchants, both wholesale and retail. It shows that "Chattra Bhandar" is not purely *swadeshi*. It proposes to import. As for exporting opinion varies. I am not, however going to enter upon an economic discussion. If you look at "D" you find that it has no connection with any political design. It does not look like a conspiracy. Mr. Norton remarks that this Company was started as a cloak to conceal the

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nefarious design. But what do we find here: shareholders are restricted. It depends upon the directors to take shareholders in. Rule X declares that if a shareholder is indebted he can not buy or sell his share to get rid of the debt. But if you read Rules VI and X together you find that there is no difficulty in selling or buying shares. There is also no difficulty for outsider to come in. Still my learned friend holds that the "Chattra Bhandar" was a device to conceal its nefarious design.

My friend suggests that the "Chattra Bhandar" was intended to help the conspiracy. 40 per cent. of its profit is to be divided amongst shareholders. My learned friend commenting on the clause which provides that 30 per cent. of its profit is to be devoted to philanthopic work, observes that it was to effectuate the nefarious design.

It is a custom in this country amongst people who start business as limited liability companies, or those who start business by themselves to distribute a portion of the profit to the welfare of the community, I submit that is a perfectly good thing. You find this, even amongst common shop-keepers who set apart something which they call "britti".

Mr. Norton : Is that evidence ?

Mr. Das : It is a common custom in this country. Can I not refer to that ? Your Honour may have come across this in many civil cases. It is very

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usual amongst shop-keepers to keep portions of their profit. They do it in this way : For each article sold they keep one pice and this they devote to charitable purposes. We have the great institution at Sodepur which the Marwaris keep up in that way—the institution where your Honour sends your horse to be broken.

My submission is that if they really intended to start the "Chattra Bhandar" as a cover for their dark design, why did they start a limited liability Company at all ? Could they not start a partnership business for that purpose ? If you start a Company, you bring yourself directly under the inspection and supervision of the Director. The accounts are rendered liable to be inspected and checked ; whereas if you start a shop, you have to avoid all that. However there is nothing to prove that the limited liability Company was formed to devote the profits to the nefarious purposes. If they had that design, they could start a shop, there is absolutely no evidence to show that profits were appropriated for any dark design.

Mr. Norton : There was no profit at all.

Mr. Das : If there was no profit, it cannot be said that they had any nefarious design. The whole thing is based upon suspicion. Assuming Aurobindo had such design, what proof is there that Aurobindo was connected with it ? He simply signed his name

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as a witness. I desired to show that no suggestion of suspicion can be based upon the evidence adduced on this point. Witness No. 84, Pobitra Chandra Datta said, "I went to Subodh Mullick and got him and Aurobindo Ghose to sign as witnesses because they were big men". Mr. Norton tried to get out from this witness Aurobindo's connection with the "Chattra Bhandar". He says "we decided to go there, as we thought that they were big men. Subodh Mullick had made a donation of a lakh of rupees towards the Bengal National College. He was looked upon as a great man in Calcutta". Pobitra said "Aurobindo used to live at that time at 12, Wellington Square. I went to Subodh Mullick and he told me looking towards Aurobindo Ghosh 'you had better take his signature'. Speaking about Aurobindo Ghose's connection with the *Bande Mataram*, my learned friend observed "I do not care whether he was Editor or not. I say he is the paper itself". Mr. Das here read the deposition of Sukumar Sen. The witness said (he was at that time professor of the National College)—"Aurobindo never advocated violence, or I would have remembered it. The Company was regarded merely as a National organisation than a commercial venture. The object was more political than commercial".

Continuing Counsel said, I find that Aurobindo was connected with the old *Bande Mataram*. He was present at some of the meetings of the Company.

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He was not the manager of the paper. He was sometime the Managing Director of the "Bonde Mataram" Company.

Counsel referring to exhibit 950 D said that Aurobindo was not connected with the *Bande Mataram* as Editor or Sub-Editor. He had nothing to do with the dealing with telegrams, reprints etc. The prosecution of the *Bande Mataram* I may tell Your Honour was for having published an English translation of an article which had appeared in the *Yugantor*.

Judge : Does not the witness Sukumar Sen say who was the Editor ?

Mr. Das : The witness stated that Bepin Chandra Pal refused to act as joint-editor along with Aurobindo Ghosh. He wanted to have the entire control of the paper as the Editor-in-Chief. But there was difference of opinion. Aurobindo Ghose was offered the Editorship but he refused to take the sole responsibility. For he could not do that. He was at that time the Principal of the National College. In only one issue his name was published as Editor. But in the next issue it was taken off.

Judge : Some addresses were presented to him as Editor.

Mr. Das : That was through the impression that he was Editor. Aurobindo was not responsible for anything that appeared in the *Bande Mataram*. There is no magic in the name "Editor".

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My learned friend says he does not care if Aurobindo is Editor. He says that he is the paper and that this paper was born in conspiracy. Let us look into it and see if we can find anything dangerous or anything that suggests bombs or conspiracy or waging war against the Government. Far from any such suggestion your Honour will find suggestions which, I have said, are the ideals of independence, and the means suggested are those of passive resistance. The point on which the greatest stress is laid in the articles is National education, *swadeshi* and boycott. These points are typical of this paper. The fourth point was the general idea of freedom. To reach the ideal of freedom they advocated the same policy I have mentioned up to the last day. You will find that they not only did not advocate the formation of secret societies but whenever anything happened which drew their attention they deprecated the secret societies in an emphatic language. I do not for a moment suggest that the ideal of the *Bande Mataram* was not "absolute independence". It was that and nothing but that, and they always deprecated the ideal of improvement of the Government in this country by the putting in one member in the Executive Council, or additional members in the Viceroy's Council. It was repeated over and over again that they were not in favour of reforms, but what they desired was a "forming". It would not serve the national ideal by

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legislation of tinkering kind, that is to say giving some advantages here and some advantages there. All the articles read out by the prosecution in condemnation of Lord Morley's scheme were in reference to that. Those are the honest views of the paper. If those views constitute in any way the waging of war against Government, I will have to say that Aurobindo is guilty. My contention is that it is open to them to preach the ideal of freedom and lay down the methods in the way the *Bande Mataram* has done—the methods of passive resistance, boycott, national education and *Swaraj*. Wherever any suggestion of any violence is made your Honour will invariably find that it is necessary for the purpose of repelling an attack. I shall read a few articles to show that it is not true that the *Bande Mataram* was born in conspiracy. I shall refer to an issue of the 18th September, 1906 under the heading "That Sinful Desire". * * * It refers to these constitutional troubles within the Congress itself. I submit that there is nothing felonious in that articles unless my friend means to say that you must read between the lines.

Mr. Das then read an article entitled "The idea of National Council" to show the attitude of the *Bande Mataram* towards secret societies. Counsel read a paragraph dated 3rd October, 1908, which he put to Purno Chandra Lahiri in cross-examination. The article was entitled "Golden Bengal Scare".

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Now with regard to National College I have one word to say. There again I do not quite understand my friend's argument. He does not suggest as I thought at first he did that the Council of National Education was limb of the conspiracy against the Government. What I understood him to suggest was—I say this subject to correction by your Honour—that Aurobindo made use of the National Council to give effect to his nefarious views. If that was so then no inference can be drawn against him from the fact that he was connected with it. I ask your Honour not to draw any inference from the fact that he was connected with the National College. If inference is to be drawn it must go further; not only must the National Council be not harmless but it must also be proved that the National Council is a part and limb of the conspiracy. Unless that is established, mere connection with the National Council will not give rise to any inference adverse to Aurobindo Ghose. You will find in the evidence that Aurobindo was connected with it not only after it was started but he came to Bengal expressly for the purpose of carrying on the National Council of Education. He took part in it before it was started as we find in the evidence of Satish Chandra Mukerjee, and the best part of the argument show that he did not intend to use the National Council of Education as a party organ in this conspiracy. At the time the National Council was formed who were the men we

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find in it? Dr. Rash Behari Ghose, Sir Gooroo Das Bannerjee and Mr. Nagendra Nath Ghose with whose name no one will ever try to associate politics. That conclusively proves that Aurobindo had no control over it, or if he had, it was not his intention to make it a sort of organ for his political activities. The people in Bengal wanted to keep the National Council of Education, free from political activities. This inference clearly arises from the names I have mentioned. It was intended, as the prospectus shows, to be an institution to further the education of the country and it was intended to be free from all political bias of either party. Aurobindo was selected as the Principal of this College because he was under the circumstances the fittest person. When he came to Calcutta in August, 1906, he was still in the service of Baroda. He does not give it up until after he is appointed Principal of the National College. With reference to this I desire to read just a few lines of the evidence of Satish Chandra Mukerjee—* * *. There is no evidence even that Aurobindo exercised any active control, so far as the selection of the course of studies was concerned. I submit that this fact is of no importance at all in arriving at the question whether Aurobindo Ghose is guilty or not of the charges brought against him. I submit that although it does not help you in coming to any conclusion as to his guilt it shows—as I have submitted to you before—that the course of the activity of

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Aurobindo Ghose was in accordance with the principles which were enunciated in that letter of 13th August, 1905. That is all that I have got to submit up to this period of 1906.

The next period I take is the period from October, 1906 to April, 1907. This is a period of very little activity on Aurobindo's part as you will find during that period he was mostly ill. You will find—I will state the facts before I prove them—that he was at Deoghar from 11th December, 1906 to the 14th December, 1906, and again from 27th January, 1907, to the middle of April, 1907, and you have heard from the evidence of Sukmar Sen that on the night he left for Deoghar permission was asked—after his name appeared as Editor of the *Bande Mataram* —if he would agree to be the Editor and upon his refusal his name was removed the next day. With regard to three different dates which I have given there is very little documentary evidence in the case, and from Aurobindo's written statement I shall have to refer to it. In this connection we see that he was ill. He had to take leave from the National College on several occasions; in fact he was practically ill during the whole of this period * * *. Satish Chandra Mukerjee was asked about it and he said that the statement about Aurobindo taking leave was true.

Another thing which I should like to point out in this connection is that there is no suggestion that

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at that time there was any activity in Seal's lodge. That was from a few days before February, 1908, to sometime in April, 1908.

With reference to this period my learned friend read out some articles in the *Bande Mataram* dealing with autonomy, *Swaraj*, etc., and he further said that they contained a show of racial antipathy, that there was no love for humanity and that they advocated a direct violation of the law. Well, I have read those articles over and over again and I say that they are absolutely—everyone of them—free from any one of those charges, except the charge—and I did not understand my friend to bring that in as a charge—that they wanted to bring in absolute *Swaraj*. What I did understand him to say—if I have understood my friend aright—was that the means suggested for attaining *Swaraj*, was not legal and it was that that made the Ideal of swaraj improper. He took care to say that and I must say that it was very fair on the part of my learned friend to point it out.

So far as these articles are concerned I submit that the charge of racial antipathy cannot be brought against the *Bande Mataram*. The particular note in the *Bande Mataram* was "love for its own people" and if that in itself involved some antipathy it may be expected, but what I want to lay stress on is, that the dominant note was not antipathy but love for its own people, but in dealing with it, may be,

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that the articles have referred to other nations not in very complimentary language. If you read the whole thing you will find that the object is not an attack on any nation at all, but to point out that we must fall back upon our own resources, and stand on our own legs, or in other words, as I have pointed out before, that you cannot attain your ideal except through your own salvation. The *Bande Mataram* had to attack other nations because it pointed out that the people of this country were under the spell of foreign civilisation, under alien civilisation and wanted to dispel by these articles that peculiar hypnotism that was cast on the people of this country by European nations. Not that European civilisation is bad but that European civilisation is for "Europeans". European nations must develop in their own way; they must rise to the noblest and best in their own traditions. So also with the Indians; they must also take their own stand. Not that European civilisation is bad—I want you to particularly notice that—you won't find that in the articles—but that European civilisation applied to us, European traditions brought into this country, are not the materials upon which this nation can grow. That is the philosophy underlying all articles. The European civilisation is as a tree which grows in the soil of England; if you bring that tree here, it will not attain the same growth because the soil is not congenial. In the same way the development of a

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nation must be based on its own traditions. If you base it on any other traditions the soil will not be congenial. As for antipathy and dislike for humanity they are not to be found in those articles. I submit they breathe all that my friend denies. I say according to these people nationalism has no rational basis to grow upon unless it be for humanity. I ask your permission here to read an article which comes into this period. It is written in very figurative language, but the thing it brings out is the inner philosophy of this School.

Counsel next referred to the period from April, 1907, to September, 1907, *i.e.*, up to the acquittal of Aurobindo Ghose in the sedition case. In this period, counsel said, Aurobindo's activities were confined to the National College and *Bande Mataram*. In this connection counsel read a letter written to Aurobindo from Tokio sympathising with him in his trouble with the *Bande Mataram* trial. There are some articles of the *Bande Mataram* of that period. Counsel then read the articles of the 17th September headed "The secret of prudence and moderation". The articles also deals with passive resistance. "Every country fought its battle of freedom in its own peculiar way. We can use our passive resistance in such a way, etc." * * * I need not trouble your Honour with other articles because the idea is the same. They are articles on the Congress, *Swaraj* and so forth.

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It is a curious feature that the whole evidence against Aurobindo is doubtful. When your Honour finds, so far as Aurobindo's case is concerned, that there is something unusual, something difficult to understand, I submit that your Honour may come to the conclusion that there is something behind the series of difficulties. When your Honour finds that some act is repeated a number of times your Honour may draw that inference. * * * I suggested to him why he did not put any mark. He says he put some mark in blue pencil which was obliterated. * * * I submit there is nothing in it which goes against Aurobindo.

The next period I take up now is from September, 1907 to December, 1907. Your Honour will find that from the middle of October, 1907 to about end of December, 1907, Aurobindo was ill and he was at Deoghar. I ask your Honour's attention to the letters and other evidence on this point because this matter is of some importance in connection not only with this topic but also with different topics.

Counsel next read a letter from Mr. Palka which related the entire activities of Aurobindo with regard to the Congress. The writer invited a number of extremist delegates. Aurobindo wanted to put the Congress on a representative basis. He said that what is alleged to be a national gathering must be national in the true sense of the word.

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Judge :—The Congress has ceased ? According to the Extremists the Congress has ceased to be. But according to the moderate it is still going. It is like "The Duma is dead. Long live the Duma". Counsel next referred to the slip which was sent to the *Bande Mataram* for discussion.

Your Honour will find, continued counsel, from the evidence of Mr. K. B. Dutt that Mr. Surendranath Banerjea did not like the idea of giving up boycott at the conference. A few days after they issued a circular that *Swadeshi* covered everything. The extremists say that it was merely a trick to mislead the people who feel very thoroughly on the question of boycott.

Mr. Das referred to a letter from Mr. Tilak to Aurobindo Ghose. It asked Aurobindo Ghose to invite a large number of extremist-delegates to the Congress. Mr. Tilak wanted to have a separate Conference for the nationalists. His idea was to have a separate Conference as soon as the deliberations of the Congress were over. Their attitude was not to break up the Congress. They want to have the question of electing Dr. Rash Behari Ghose decided by voting. The extremists wanted to have a separate sort of party organisation for them. In England the parties have their own organisations,—the Liberals, the Conservatives down to the Socialists. They wanted to see that the views of the delegates were represented by the Congress. I submit the Nationalist

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Conference was held and passed resolutions. These resolutions were published in news-papers. They assembled not to break up the Congress. They did not say "if you don't accept our views, we shall break your head". They had no bombs in their contemplation. I do not say as my friend suggested that they had bombs in their contemplation.

Judge :—It is rather forcing their views on the Congress.

Mr. Norton :—Surely.

Mr. Das :—The position of affairs was this. The nationalist delegates did not want Dr. Rash Behari Ghose as the President. They wanted Lala Lajpat Rai. If he declined, then they would have Mr. Surendranath Banerjea.

Mr. Das :—There is no difference between exteremists and moderates. The moderates have the ideal of *Swaraj* on the colonial lines while the extremists have the ideal of Swaraj in the independent form.

Mr. Norton :—The moderates have the ideal of Government as obtained in the colonies.

Mr. Das :—What is the difference ? Where is the control of England over the Colonies.

Judge :—It is a matter of policy.

Mr. Das :—It is not a question of ideals. The Parliament cannot force its views. The extremists liked to put their ideals in a more logical form.

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The *Bande Mataram* made this point clear. The moderates and extremists mean the same thing but the moderates have not the courage to sing as the extremists.

The same letter contained a phrase which was printed as "Government Expression", saying that if Dr. Ghose was rejected, there would be "Government Expression".

Judge :—It is probably repression.

Mr. Das next made reference to a letter, from Mr. Tilak to Babu Moti Lal Ghose asking him not to accept Dr. Ghose as the leader. Counsel referred to the manifesto issued by Aurobindo Ghose inviting extremist delegates to the nationalist conference here.

Your Honour heard the discussion about the scheme for the constitution of the Congress. That was another point on which there was a good deal of dispute between the extremists and the moderates. Mr. Norton suggested that he got it at Surat, nobody would dispute this. To my mind it was a scheme drawn up for the purpose of drawing constitution for the Congress. The subjects mentioned were National Fund, Arbitration Court, Primary Education, *Swaraj* and Boycott. They were to be discussed either in the Congress or it suggests a scheme that is to be proposed before the country for the Congress. The worst point in that is the establishment of Arbitration system, of course from our point of view. There is nothing sinister ; nothing

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suggestive of Bombs, conspiracy or anything of the kind.

Then some other letters appear during that period. I will not read them. They prove Aurobindo's connection with the *Bande Mataram*. It is admitted. That is the letter I have referred to in connection with Aurobindo's residing at Deoghur. In this letter the writer made suggestions for the improvement of the *Bande Mataram*. It was from a man of Bombay. He thought that Aurobindo has some influence over the *Bande Mataram*, that is why he wrote it to him. It is clear, that Aurobindo had some sort of control and I have all along admitted that both here and elsewhere in connection with the other case.

Aurobindo's work was a work of love to the "*Bande Mataram*". He would not be put to such a position so as to be responsible for anything appearing in the *Bande Mataram*. He had not the time nor his health would allow him to look after or supervise that paper. That is why he refused to be the editor. He was not the editor at any time. It is the case with English newspapers that the reporters send their reports and they are printed and the editor is responsible for what appears. He associates himself with the views but he does not hold himself responsible for anything that appears in the editorial columns. I can't ask Your Honour to read the whole but there was nothing to show that he was responsible. Continuing counsel said—I have got a few articles of the

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Bande Mataram placed before Your Honour. I placed articles published in December 1906. I have got 3 or 4 articles representative of different views of the different parties. Aurobindo was arrested on the 2nd May, 1908. I have taken up all the articles from December 1906 to April 1908. They conclusively support the contention that I have made from beginning to end.

Mr. Das then dealt with several articles from the paper during this period and assailed the argument of Mr. Norton about the alleged connection between the National papers.

He continued :—I have dealt with the evidence with regard to the so-called conspiracy and I now desire to draw You Honour's attention to certain points in common between the moderate papers, the *Bengalee* and the *Indu Prokash* for instance and the Anglo-Indian papers like the *Statesman*, the *Indian Daily News*, the *Pioneer* and the *Englishman*. Still these papers have their peculiarities. I can not forget the fact that there must be a great deal in common between them. It is, by no means, a violent assumption to say that. But inspite of the points in common, each paper must stand on its own legs. Your Honour will find certain peculiarities in each paper. Your Honour knows the *Bengalee* and the *Indu Prokash* of Bombay are perfectly maderate papers. I do not know why my friend will extend his triangle so far.

So far as the *Bande Mataram* and the *Jugantar* are concerned, I shall show by reference to one article

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that according to the *Bande Mataram*, the ideal of freedom must be attained by passive resistance, *Swadeshi* Boycott, national education, Courts of Arbitration etc. To quote from the famous speech of Gladstone, "you must educate yourself for self-government. You must take up as much work of Government as you can do". National education, *Swadeshi*, all these are methods laid down by the *Bande Mataram*. The paper says that it is only by pursuing these methods that you can attain self-government. Make your-self fit for self-government. This is the doctrine of political philosophers in Europe upon which the view is based. This view has again been analysed by the *Bande Mataram* and adapted to *Vedantism* pure and simple. Every philosopher in England deals with the growth of democracy. From the time of Hobbs down to the time of Spencer, —passing from the period of English History known as the period of French revolution it has been held that the Government can only exist with the tacit consent on the part of the people. In point of time, if the character of the Government be most despotic that you can imagine or representative, the mere fact that the Gevernment does exist shows conclusively that the people has consent to it. There was a time, according to Hobbs, when the people and the king used to meet together. They met why ? To determine the consent of the people.

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Locke borrowed his views from Rousseau on this point. Spencer's "Man *vs.* State" embodies this view. As a matter of fact, the relation between the Governor and the governed is based upon actual contract. It may not be so historically speaking but it must be true logically speaking. You cannot govern people, against their wishes. At every point of time that the Government exists, it shows that it exists, because the people lent their support.

Continuing counsel said Aurobindo also exposes the same theory. He gives a new expression and makes it a new point of his philosophy. This doctrine of the tacit consent of the people and another doctrine which is misapplied, namely "vox populi vox dei," are applicable in this connection. Aurobindo holds the same principles whether with regard to the nation or the individual. He sees in the development of the society or the individual, the manifestation of God. He takes the same principle of development according to the law of Nature or law of God, in the light of *Vedantism*. "Vox populi vox dei", i.e. the voice of the people is the voice of God, because the people are the manifestation of God. No man can attain salvation except by severe self-restraint. Unless he restrains himself, he has no hope of salvation.

If you apply this doctrine, as Aurobindo Ghose applied it, to the situation of this country, what is

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the result? The result is that the people want *swaraj* or self-government. I do not desire to repeat my argument here. Aurobindo has taken care never to define the form of *swaraj*. Aurobindo has advocated national education, *swadeshi*, boycott and court of arbitration whereas the *Jugantar* in its articles headed the *Suchona* holds that no progress of the country is possible without independence. Talk of *Swadeshi*, the *Jugantar* laughs at it. Talk of National Education, arbitration court, the *Jugantar* says all that is a pastime. No progress of the country can ever take place unless you have absolute independence. This is the essential difference between the principles of the *Bande Mataram* and the *Jugantar*. Mr. Das here read articles from the *Sandhya*, *Nabasakti* and other papers to show the difference in the tone of their writings.

Mr. Das then went on to discuss some unpublished writings of Aurobindo Ghose. My learned friend, observed counsel, argues that the writing No. 2998 furnishes an index of the man's thoughts. This writing is in Bengali, my friend does not show that it is in the handwriting of Aurobindo Ghose.

Mr. Nortion :—I suggest that is the handwriting of Sarojini.

Mr. Das :—It certainly looks like a lady's handwriting. I fail to understand how it furnished an index of Sarojini's thoughts. Sarojini is not before Your Honour as a conspirator. Referring to the article

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"morality of boycott". Mr. Das said "since the man did not publish this, I venture to submit that he did not publish as he thought the article might be misunderstood. How can you convict a man for unpublished writings? It is for your Honour to say whether these writings can furnish an index of the man's thoughts. I submit they cannot. Because the words and phrases employed do not clearly and completely bring out his ideals. Aurobindo thought the writings might be misunderstood so he did not publish them. Unless you can show that they were secret documents, intended to be circulated amongst the people secretly, you can not draw the inference that the writings supply an index of man's thoughts. I ask your Honour to interpret the point charitably. These writings were not published anywhere. Aurobindo could publish them easily. They are open to this charitable construction that since Aurobindo feared they might be misunderstood, he did not publish them. I ask your Honour to accept the charitable construction. The writings do not bear the meaning which my learned friend sought to put into it".

Mr. Das read a long unpublished article by Aurobindo Ghose entitled "What is extremism". Referring to a sentence "the law was made for man and not man for the law", the Judge asked if each person was entitled to pass his own judgment on the law.

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Mr. Das, emphatically replied "yes". After all he continued, the principle of a man's life must be guided by his own conscience.

Mr. Norton, interrupting, asked how the societies were to exist ?

Mr. Das continuing with his argument put the question "is it not the same view which obtains in other countries with regard to passive resistance ? Have not the people often disobeyed the provisions of the law and taken the penalty ?"

Mr. Norton :—Not on the ground that the law is wrong.

Mr. Das :—That is Aurobindo's view. Proceeding Mr. Das said that Aurobindo put it on the ground of organic unity between the government and the people. They were not judging the man on account of his ideals. So far as the infringement of the law was concerned it was the same in other countries. The government does a certain thing and the people say it is wrong and unjust. If they are fined, they are prepared to pay the fine.

In language of Aurobindo you have got here an authority which has not sprung from the nation as a part of its organism. The government has not sprung here from within the people as the government of the other countries.

No one can gainsay the truth of that ; Aurobindo never hesitated to put that forward over and over again. I object to the government of this country not because

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it is an autocratic government, not because it is not a democratic government or of its particular actions which are criticised by others. My objection is based on philosophy ; that this government has not sprung from the people as a part of an organism.

Aurobindo's argument was based on the ground of "utility". And after all, counsel declared, the basis of all legislation in England was utility ; something which helped the growth and development of the nation. That was the claim of the Government. We pass this law because it is in the interests of the people, and the interests of the people, counsel said, could not be considered apart from the development of the Nation.

Counsel read out some further passages from the article where Aurobindo discussed the methods by which they were to attain the ideal of freedom. Commenting on this counsel said if a bomb was brought to Aurobindo and he was asked "shall I throw this at the first Englishman I come across ? Aurobindo would say "Will this accomplish the great ideal"? The answer, counsel said, would necessarily be "no" it would not produce the desired effect.

His Honour :—If effective, use it ?

Mr. Das :—If the oppression increases to such an extent and people are so united together, and have got such resource at their back that they think they

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can fight the Government in battle as it were they may do it, not now.

His Honour :—He goes back to the utilitarian method if you are strong enough to fight.

Mr. Das :—Yes, that is the whole trend of his argument. Proceeding Mr. Das repeated his former argument regarding the methods advocated by Aurobindo, insisting on the point that according to Aurobindo violent methods were bad and peaceful methods were good. In the paragraph discussing the methods, which counsel read. Aurobindo was taking each particular ideal and probing it in order to test its truth or otherwise. He was discussing the best ideal. Counsel read a sentence regarding one of the means discussed by Aurobindo which ran "whether it is worthy of a great people who is struggling to be" counsel called His Honour's attention to this question put by Aurobindo.

Counsel continued :—If there was section in the Penal Code—which fortunately there was not—that the preaching of National freedom meant sedition, Aurobindo's answer would be, "nevertheless I must do it. I cannot help it. It is within me and that is what I owe to myself and my God".

Referring to another passage where after discussing certain questions Aurobindo said "that result will be anarchy" counsel said he was surprised at Mr. Norton who was an English scholar saying that he meant

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anarchist's outrages. He challenged Mr. Norton to point out from the writings of any English writer that the term "anarchy" has been used to mean "anarchist's outrages".

"Anarchy" counsel said meant "disorder" and Aurobindo was referring to a sort of social chaos.

Counsel read some further passages with the object of showing that metaphors used by Aurobindo were taken by Mr. Norton literally. When he spoke of sacrificing their lives for the country, Aurobindo meant that they should suffer. Referring to the expression "Manuring the soil with their blood" counsel asked if such a thing was possible, it was a mere metaphor. He exhorted the people to suffer to the last extremity. What would happen, counsel asked, if passive resistance could be so well organised that all the people refused to pay taxes. It was not a very pleasurable subject to deal with, but counsel said one could well imagine that there would be firing of guns and the result of that would be that the people would be weltering in blood.

Proceeding Mr. Das said he was outlining a passive resistance which would be impossible to reach, but the man who was writing was pushing a wrong point to its logical conclusion. The point he had fixed his attention on was the method and the ideal. The point he was pursuing was whether it was effective and consistent with the traditions

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of the country. No taxation could grow out of subjection unless it was prepared to suffer. The reference to blood and darkness and death, counsel averred, was figurative. If it led to disorder even then it was welcome because it helped to attain the development they were seeking. It did not help Mr. Norton in thinking that it referred to bombs, ammunition or any other thing.

Referring to the word revolution which appeared in a passage in the article, counsel said, that this did not have the same meaning as the French Revolution. The word was used in the sense of peaceful revolution.

Proceeding with his argument counsel said "If Your Honour looks at the dominant notes in the unpublished writings it is perfectly in accord with the real nature of Aurobindo's writings. If you take hold of a word here and a paragraph there you will not get the real intention. Your Honour must read that article with all the other articles. Counsel referred to another article from which Mr. Norton quoted the lines of Wordsworth incorporated in the article "who would free themselves must themselves strike the blow".

Commenting on this Mr. Das said :—"My friend seems to think that it is indicative of bombs. If Your Honour reads the whole article you will find that it is written in appreciation of Rash Behary

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Ghose's speech delivered at the Congress. The author quotes this particular line of poetry to support the contention that Mr. Ghose put forward that nations by themselves are made.

Counsel next dealt with the "sweets' letter". He said, "Your Honour will find that having regard to the circumstances as disclosed in the evidence of this case. Your Honour cannot accept the document as being in the hand-writing of Barindra Kumar Ghose, or that it was sent to Aurobindo Ghose. What does it show? The letter is supposed to have been written by one brother to another at Surat. Therefore if this letter is genuine both the brothers were at Surat at that time. I submit that it is utterly improbable, assuming that both the brothers are conspirators, that one brother should write to another brother in this way. There they could have talked to each other, explained their thoughts—each to the other—without writing at all. The letter states "We must have sweets all over India ready made for emergency. I wait here for your answer". The case for the prosecution is that Barin used to address Aurobindo as "shejda". Did Barin forget this when writing this letter? He writes "Dear brother". In this country no younger brother would write to any elder brother, as "Dear brother" except to the eldest brother.

Judge :—What do they write?

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Mr. Das :—*Mejda*, *Shejda*, etc. only the eldest brother is addressed as a brother. The fact that both the brothers being at Surat, Barin wrote to Aurobindo is extremely improbable.

I draw Your Honour's attention to the fact that Barin signs "Barindra Kumar Ghose". My learned friend says that Aurobindo and Barindra are Europeanised. But Barin came to England at the very early age of one year. I left England 15 years ago, I do not know whether the custom has changed there. But when I was in England I noticed that a brother never set out his full name when writing to another brother.

Judge : I would not put my full name, I would omit my surname.

Mr. Das : Nobody would sign like that considering the probabilities, I submit that when a brother desires to communicate something to another brother, the proper form of signing his name is not to give the full name like Barindra Kumar Ghose.

Mr. Das continuing said, "this sweets' Letter is taken with Aurobindo and treasured down. It is brought to Calcutta back again. It is kept at 23, Scotts Lane for a couple of months and Police are lucky enough to find the letter at 48, Grey Street. It is grossly improbable. I submit that under the circumstances, Your Honour will hesitate to accept this as evidence and proof against Aurobindo Ghose".

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Mr. Das here read from the evidence of Mr. Greagan. Counsel commenting on the evidence said, on the 2nd May, not only the 48, Grey Street, was searched, but the other houses were searched as well. All the articles found at the searches were sent to the Park Street Thana. There is no reason why an exception should be made with regard to 48, Grey Street. The documents of 15, Gopi Mohon Dutta's Lane, and the garden were both sent to the Park Street Thana.

Mr. Das then referred to the great confusion in the evidence of the Police witnesses with regard to the finding and examination of the letter at the thana.

Mr. Das: There is just another point about the "sweets" which is this—Your Honour will find that the number of the bundle was subsequently added to Mr. Greagan in his cross-examination says "The letters might have come out of the envelopes". I submit that the "sweets' letter" could not have been in the bundle. The number of the letters in the documents must at least be 64. There were 64 letters and 20 envelopes.

Mr. Das referred to the evidence of several other witnesses and commented on them, after which he summed up. He said, "I must thank your Honour and gentlemen assessors for the very kind and patient hearing you have given me

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throughout this case. My only wish was that the task might have fallen on other hands to place this case before the Court ; but as it fell on my hands I did all I possibly could to place the evidence in this case before the Court in a connected form. There is one point which struck me at the outset of this case but I did not refer to it so long, as I thought it could be dealt with mere conveniently and appropriately after I had finished dealing with evidence oral and documentary on the record. Your Honour will find that my learned friend's case is that Aurobindo is the head of this conspiracy. He has credited Aurobindo with vast intellectual attainments and with vast powers of organisation and his case was that he was directing this conspiracy and working from behind. Now it is with reference to this that I make my submission before Your Honour, that having regard to the nature of the conspiracy which has been established by the evidence if, it has been established at all—it is impossible that Aurobindo could ever have believed that conspiracy was likely to succeed. If you say that Aurobindo is not gifted with the intellectual powers with which you have credited him that is another matter. But if you say that he is all that you have been kind enough to say he is and concomittant with that he is the head of the conspiracy and is directing the conspiracy my answer to that is, the conspiracy of such a nature that it is impossible to believe that Aurobindo

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could ever have thought in his mind that it could succeed. My learned friend has referred to the thousand and one ramifications of that conspiracy and he has argued that there was a conspiracy from Calcutta to Tuticorin and other places and in order, to substantiate this vast conspiracy as it were, he has not hesitated to bring a charge of conspiracy against persons of whom there is not the slightest evidence on record to show that they were in any way connected with it. I ask you to disregard all that; the conspiracy is in my learned friend's imagination; I do not for a moment suggest that he does not believe it to be true; I don't suggest that he does not believe every word of what he has said and that he has no misgivings on the point. I wholly concede that he fully believed in the conspiracy which he has put forward before the Court and the only way I can explain that and the only suggestion that I can make is that he has been under the tutelage of the police for a long time and the police have poisoned his mind during the last ten months and no doubt he sincerely believed in it and put it forward before the Court.

But the evidence is entirely different. From the evidence as is furnished by the confessions in this Court—confessions upon which the prosecution relies—you will find that it is a childish conspiracy —a toy-revolution. It is impossible that Aurobindo could ever have believed in his heart of hearts that

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by bombing one or two Englishmen, or some Englishmen at different places, they would have been able to subvert the British Government. If you credit him with intellectual powers and say that he has a brilliant mind, it is not open he was the leader of a childish conspiracy and a toy-revolution. That is the difficulty which comes at the very threshold of this case. Either drop the suggestion that it is because of his intellectual powers because of his eminent qualities with which he is credited that you want the Court to believe that he was the leader of the conspiracy; or the other theory that he was in fact the leader of the conspiracy, and of this alleged revolutionary project. Apart from that suggestion if you turn to the evidence against Aurobindo, my answer is that the confessions exonerate him. If it is argued that the watch witnesses and the other witnesses have proved conclusively that there has been association between Aurobindo and the conspriators, I submit that that evidence is such that you can't place the slightest reliance upon it; not only that, but that under the circumstances one could only expect the evidence to be of such character. If the Government takes into its head to believe that there is a vast conspiracy which is threatening the stability of the government, it is common knowledge, that you do come across spies who give false evidence. I shall just read a passage from a book written by

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an eminent Judge. "The government under those circumstances have spies who wriggle into the case, causes drop into families, abstract correspondence and forge letters". Therefore the evidence given before you is evidence that you can expect in a case like this. It seems to me if you consider the evidence carefully and apply the different tests I have suggested and submitted for consideration I have hardly any doubt that you will reject that evidence as untrustworthy. Is it argued that in the different letters that have been put forward there is a case against Aurobindo, that these letters show that Aurobindo is implicated in any conspiracy whatsoever? My answer is that the letters themselves don't show anything of the kind. It is my learned friend's interpretation on those letters; and in some case in regard to Aurobindo's connection with certain boys that interpretation has been of such a character that one can hardly resist the temptation of calling it ridiculous, reminding one of the case of Mrs. Bardell against Pickwick. He reads a document and imports into that document, but which have evolved out of friend's inner conscience. If you read the documents as they are, having regard to the circumstances under which they were written, I venture to submit before you, that there is hardly any doubt, whatever may be the view, that those documents do not bring the guilt home to Aurobindo Ghose with reference to any of the charges brought against him.

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My further submission is that my learned friend to a certain extent realised that and he said out of despair as it were, 'never mind the letters, never mind the evidence but look at the probability, look at the man's thought'. It was in that view that he put before you the different newspapers and the charge of conspiracy and wholesale conspiracy against many men of light and leading in this country. 'Read the *Bande Mataram*, read the different speeches, and read the other newspapers—my friend says that you must read the other papers because they are all linked together and you discover what his thoughts were. If you analyse those speeches and writings and if you find an indication that the man was putting forward before the country, the ideal of freedom, you must take it for granted that he was also in favour of applying bombs, of secret societies and such other means as some of the evidence in this case discloses'. My submission to you is—I made it before and I do so again—that these papers and the writings and speeches are not legal evidence in the case at all, but if you do take them you find unmistakable indication that whatever may be Aurobindo's views, he is not guilty of the charges brought against him. I have placed before Your Honour the letter of the 13th August 1905. I read to you the whole of that letter and commented on it and I explained to you what the different thoughts in that letter are 'I say, as I have said in my statement, that ever since I came

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to Calcutta from Baroda, I never for one single moment deviated from the principles laid down in that latter. I have said I never took any part in politics. I have said in my written statement, whatever the nature of my activities, be they political, social or religious, that throughout the whole course of my activities, I never for one single moment deviated from the principle laid down in that letter of 13th August. The whole of my case before you is this. If it is suggested that I preached the ideal of freedom, to my country which is against the law, I plead guilty to the charge. If that is the law here I say I have done that and I request you to convict me. But do not impute to me crimes that I am not guilty of; deeds against which my whole nature revolts, and which having regard to my mental capacity are something which could never have been perpetrated by me. If it is an offence to preach the ideal of freedom, I admit having done it—I have never disputed it. It is for that, that I have given up all the prospects of my life. It is for that, that I came to Calcutta to live for it and to labour for it. It has been the one thought of my waking hours, the dream of my sleep. If that is my offence, there is no necessity to bring witness into the box to depose to different things in connection with that. Here am I and I admit it. My whole subnission before the Court is this. Let not the scence enacted in connection with the sedition trial of the *Bande Matram* be

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enacted over again, and let the whole trial go into side-issue. If that is my offence let it be so stated and I am cheerful to bear any punishment. It pains me to think that crimes I could never have thought of or deeds repellent to me, and against which my whole nature revolts, should be attributed to me and that on the strength, not only of evidence on which the slightest reliance cannot be placed, but on my writings which breathe and breathe only of that high ideal which I felt I was called upon to preach. I have done that and there is no question that I have ever denied it. I have adopted the principles of the political philosophy of the West and I have assimilated that to the immortal teachings of *Vedantism*. I felt I was called upon to preach to my country to make them realise that India had a mission to perform in the committee of nations. If that is my fault you can chain me, imprison me, but you will never get out of me a denial of that charge. I venture to submit under no section of the law do I come for preaching that ideal of freedom and with regard to the deeds with which I have been charged, I submit there is no evidence on record and it is absolutely idconsistent with everything that I taught, that I wrote and with every tendency of my mind discovered in the evidence".

My appeal to you therefore is that a man like this who is being charged with the offences imputed to him stands not only before the bar in this Court

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but stands before the bar of the High Court of History and my appeal to you is this: That long after this controversy is hushed in silence, long after this turmoil, this agitation ceases, long after he is dead and gone, he will be looked upon as the poet of patriotism, as the prophet of nationalism and the lover of humanity. Long after he is dead and gone his words will be echoed and reechoed not only in India, but across distant seas and lands. Therefore I say that the man in his position is not only standing before the bar of this Court but before the bar of the High Court of History. The time has come for you, sir, to consider your judgement and for you, gentlemen, to consider your verdict. I appeal to you, sir, in the name of all the traditions of the English Bench that forms the most glorious chapter of English History. I appeal to you in the name of all that is noble, of all the thousand principles of law which have emanated from the English Bench, and I appeal to you in the name of the distinguished Judges who have administered the law in such a manner as to compel not only obedience, but the respect of all those in whose cases they had administered the law. I appeal to you in the name of the glorious chapter of English History and let it not be said that an English Judge forgets to vindicate justice. To you, gentlemen, I appeal in the name of the very ideal that Aurobindo preached and in the name of all the traditions of our country;

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and let it not be said that two of his own countrymen were overcome by passions and prejudices and yielded to the clamour of the moment.

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